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THE
HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS OF ENGLAND

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Roman Paved Road over Blackstone Edge.

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The Highways & Byways of England.

Their History and Romance.

T942

BY

T. W. WILKINSON.

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INTRODUCTION.

Within living memory the King's highway has undergone vicissitudes to which it would be difficult to find a parallel. First it was thronged with traffic, then deserted, and now it is thronged with traffic again. Its meridian of continuous expansion and growth, its decline, and its revivification with the advent of cycling, and still more of automobilism, have all taken place in a span of about seventy years, and together they form a series of mutations unexampled in the annals of internal communication.

As a result of the return of traffic to the old lines which touch our history at so many points, the faults of those lines are no longer, as they were during the great development of railways in the Victorian era, matters of merely academic or antiquarian interest; they are matters of practical importance, and, as such, are steadily forcing themselves upon public notice. For they are already a serious impediment to cheap, rapid, and safe communication, and on whether they can be remedied, and our roads thereby made suitable for modern methods of transport, may depend the solution of many great problems that confront the nation.

One of those problems may be the retention of our place in the domain of trade. Nearly

a century before the opening of railways, when our roads were the principal channels of communication, much of our prosperity and commercial eminence was attributed to the circumstance that our highways, bad though they were judged by the engineering standard, were superior to those of other countries. Adam Smith's contention, that the increasing wealth of England was mainly due to improvements in her roads, was endorsed by other political economists; and about 1840 the French Minister of Commerce eulogised our highways, declaring that it was principally owing to them that England had an advantage over France in the markets of the world. The relative positions have since changed. The highways of England now suffer by comparison with those of our Continental rivals. While we neglected our roads, allowing the existing system to fall into decay and making very few additions to it, both France and Germany displayed great activity in highway construction, and are to-day intersected by routes which are to our own what the Holyhead Road (in many respects the best of our trunk lines) is to a meandering byway. As long as railways were the controlling agencies in internal transport this circumstance was practically negligible; but now that road-borne traffic is rapidly increasing in England and on the Continent it is of great moment, and may

have to be taken seriously into account in connection with our competition with other countries.

The history of our highways not only shows how the faults which handicap us originated and have come down to us, but also indicates how the needed improvements may be effected. It tells us that our roads, with their erratic lines and severe gradients, their narrowness and sinuosity, their breakneck hills and dangerous corners, were made so nearly as often from choice as from necessity; that opportunities for improving them were not always taken; that our highway system, as a whole, is a colossal monument of our general "muddle through" policy, and an outcome of a lack of intelligence, forethought, technical knowledge, and, above all, statesmanship; and that only by concentrating authority can our roads be made adequate to the needs of the times.

Though our highway system is made up of bits of all the ages, it still curiously reflects, as a whole, the physical state of England in the earliest days of our history. About one-third of the country was then covered with dense wood, thicket, or scrub, and over much of the rest stretched dismal swamps. In general, therefore, ways were perforce carried over the high lands, and thus, in a large measure, our roads acquired their principal characteristic

Centuries later, when regular communication had been established between different parts of

the country, the same conditions were still factors in road-making. Clearings and drainage had greatly extended the open areas; but numerous forests remained, and there were many tracts of clay impassable for half the year, as well as series of bogs as perilous to travellers as those of Dartmoor are to the incautious tourist of our own times. In some counties the transport of heavy goods was impossible during the winter months. At the suppression of Jervaulx Abbey in 1537, Richard Bellasis, who was entrusted with the removal of its valuables, reported that he could not despatch the lead taken from the roofs till next summer, "for the ways in that countrie [Yorkshire] are so foule and deepe that no carriage can pass in winter." The lead was consequently stored at Jervaulx till, with the return of sunshine, the roads became dry enough to bear the clumsy vehicles. Two centuries later transport was similarly hampered in parts of Kent. Trees were conveyed on a tug, which was sometimes drawn by as many as twenty-two oxen, and, as they had to be left in the mire when the rains began, it took two or three years to get them from the Tonbridge district to Chatham. Transport was particularly difficult on the Sussex clay, which had an evil repute for centuries. As late as 1751 Dr. Burton suggested that all the animals (including the women) in that county were long-legged owing to the "difficulty of pulling their

feet out of so much mud," which, he said, strengthened the muscles and lengthened the bones!

Owing to the danger of becoming engulfed in clay or of sinking into a bog, carriers, like the early road-makers, kept to the high lands. Their packhorse trains wore tracks over the hill ranges, and these became recognised trade routes, and were ultimately, in many cases, turned into roads. The conversion began towards the end of the seventeenth century, when carts and wagons had come into general use. As ways suitable for wheeled traffic were then called for, and as the contemporary road-makers could not throw such ways over soft ground, or, at all events, could not make a hard way except on a naturally good and stable foundation, such as rock or stone, the packhorse lines were followed in all their climbing and twisting and abrupt turnings.

Concrete instances could be multiplied almost indefinitely. The Wells-Shepton Mallet road, the Whitby-Ruswarp road, and scores of the emphatic highways linking Lancashire and Yorkshire are unquestionably on packhorse routes, running as they do over steep hills instead of through valleys along the line of least resistance. But it is enough to note that the unscientific race of road-makers never crossed low-lying ground if they could possibly avoid it, and that in consequence they intensified the circuitous and hilly nature of our highways in general.

The turnpike system, introduced as a solution of the "road problem" as it existed in Stuart times, and peculiar to this country, no other having ever adopted it, was the next factor in moulding our roads, to which it gave many of the bad qualities they now possess. To it we owe many of the extremely erratic lines that vex the engineer and cause so vast a waste of energy. These were brought about in many ways. A prolific cause of the resultant expense and loss of time to generations of travellers was squabbling between two highway authorities. One opposed a turnpike Bill promoted by the other, and in consequence a scheme was held up for years or abandoned altogether. The effect can be seen to this day even in connection with so important a highway as the Great North Road, the remarkable line of which is, in some parts of its course, due to fights over obtaining power to turnpike.

Besides hampering communication in this manner, the trusts added largely to the number of hilly roads. As one of the necessary results of making a highway was a material increase in the value of the adjoining lands, the line was frequently taken precisely where it would best suit the pockets of the promoters, sometimes over hills that might easily have been avoided. It is for this reason that certain of the roads extending from Manchester into Cheshire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire cross the summits of hills. Number of

similar highways, in the construction of which public requirements were subordinated to private interests with a shamelessness unmatchable outside road annals, have now practically disappeared; for so little did they return in tolls that they brought nothing but sorrow to their bondholders, and, being neglected in consequence, are represented at the present time by a few parallel ruts. The construction of some of such roads, however, was beneficial to the districts through which they pass, because otherwise those districts would have lacked roads practicable for wheeled vehicles, and of great service, therefore, to agriculturists, till many years later.

In numerous cases, again, turnpike trusts made their roads so narrow that on them two coaches could not run abreast. They considered that it was enough to provide semi-circular refuges, into which a coach could draw and wait while another, travelling in the opposite direction, passed it. Some of these makeshifts are still in existence, and curiously exemplify the haphazard and unsystematic manner in which our highway system was formed.

There was, in truth, insufficient Parliamentary supervision over turnpike trusts, which, bound and restricted though they were in many particulars, were allowed far too much liberty in the making of roads. Had they been placed under the control of a central authority, investors

would have been spared some bitter pangs, and our highway system would have been extended with more regard to national requirements and less to purely local needs, the improvement of estates, and the evasion of parochial obligations.

Public attention was first sharply focussed on the many faults and shortcomings in the products of the early road-makers and of the turnpike trusts by the Rebellion of 1745. General Wade's failure to relieve Carlisle owing to the vileness of the highway between that city and his head-quarters at Newcastle, and the ease with which the Highlanders, unencumbered by baggage or wagon, outstripped the royal army, and left the cavalry and artillery far in the rear, compelled Parliament to direct its attention to the highways in the northern part of the kingdom, with the result that it passed an Act for the formation of a road for wheeled traffic between Newcastle and Carlisle, which were then connected by nothing but a bridle-way. This was carried into effect in 1756, General Wade employing his army on the undertaking. The line of the Roman Wall was followed for thirty miles, and a long stretch of that structure was pulled down to furnish materials for the work, which has ever since been known as the "Military Road." Subsequently other highways were made for military and civil purposes, and the impulse thus given to the construction of roads resulted

in a vast improvement in communication, particularly in Cumberland.

A new era then dawned—an era which did not end till the King's highway had been robbed of all its traffic and decay had spread along it to its extremities, north and south, east and west, and till its revival at any time seemed in the highest degree improbable. It was an era of road-making and mending. Side by side with the construction of new highways was carried on the improvement of the principal old lines, all of which were modernised to a greater or lesser degree. Every trunk road in the kingdom was added to in some parts and taken from in others, straightened out, and generally made less trying to horse and man alike. Long hollows were filled up by embankments; hills were cut through, crossed at a lower level, or altogether avoided; trees and other obstructions were removed; widenings were effected to facilitate the flow of traffic; and loops and dangerous corners were cut off.

Some of the most beneficial of such improvements were hastily projected and begun when railways were rapidly spreading over the land. Not a few of the short-sighted predicted the speedy downfall of steam transport, and there were some who quoted with complacency Jeremiah vi. 16 ("Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths,

where is the good way, and walk in it, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk in it"). Road works were, therefore, started in the last days of coaching, and most of them were finished, notwithstanding that it had been plain during their progress that they could never have the desired effect of keeping traffic in the old channels.

Our roads were thus metamorphosed. Bad as they are now, they were immeasurably worse before they were patched and sliced in the golden age of coaching. Not one of any importance takes exactly the same course as it did originally, and many of the hills which the old-time traveller slowly climbed have vanished as completely as the little streams through which his horse plashed.

While, however, our highway system was revolutionised by the numerous works carried out in the coaching age, it could not be freed from all of its old faults. Ineffaceable were the marks of the packhorse and of the early road-maker. The accumulated defects of centuries could not be remedied without a combined effort and an outlay impossible to the trusts, which, besides being heavily in debt, were neither responsible for nor specially interested in roads other than those under their own management. Nothing short of State action would have sufficed to accomplish so stupendous a task.

The principal faults of our highways are, therefore, relics of far-off days, and they have patently descended to us, through many generations, mainly because of insufficient public care for internal communication. For this neglect the blame must be laid at the door of the State, which, since the departure of the Romans, has not taken upon itself the provision of roads for general use. Parliament has probably devoted more care and time to the subject of highways than to any other. It has debated every phase of it at great length, called in to its aid eminent engineers and other experts, held costly inquiries, and by legislative enactments dealt with the most minute details respecting traffic, down to the shape of the heads of nails for affixing the tyres to wheels and the precise form of axles to be used in given circumstances. But the making of roads it has nearly always left to philanthropic effort and municipal and private enterprise; and, as a natural corollary, system and co-ordination have been conspicuously lacking, and no large, well-conceived scheme of road construction has ever been carried out.

It is probable that, had not traffic temporarily left the roads, England would have followed the example of France, which solved her "road problem" by constituting a Minister of Roads and Bridges, in whose hands was placed the supervision of her highway system. Under his

directions the roads were divided into several classes, the most important of which are *Routes Nationales* (constructed and maintained by the nation) and *Routes Departementales* (constructed and maintained by the various departments at the expense of the Government). By this means the whole of the French highway system was re-made and brought up to its present high standard. The scheme, on its inauguration, attracted much notice in this country, and many times it was proposed that we should adopt it or a modification of it. Weary of the turnpike system, which had always been costly and irksome, and was then plainly moribund, as well as disgusted with the chicanery and negligence in connection with parochial highways, reformers saw in the bold measures taken in France a means of disposing once for all of controversies and nuisances which had lasted for centuries. But railways were monopolising the attention of the public at large, and partly for this reason, and partly because the general opinion was that there would be little further use for roads, the Legislature continued on its old course.

The time has now come, if we are not to ignore the lessons of history, for a change of policy. Centuries of experience demonstrate the costliness and futility of leaving the care of our roads to thousands of local rulers mostly destitute alike of foresight, practical knowledge, and true public

spirit, and point to the desirability of greatly diminishing the number of highway authorities, that something like singleness of purpose may be attained. Our social progress may be contingent on whether we heed this plain teaching of the past, whence alone can be derived guidance for the future, and our commercial supremacy may be affected, perhaps vitally, by our action in regard to our roads. It has been said that the coming question is, " first, roads ; second, roads ; and third and last, roads " ; and it cannot be doubted that time will speedily justify the proposition.

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CHAPTER I.

In the Beginning: Roman Roads.

For the beginnings of our highway system we need not attempt to penetrate the mists of remote antiquity. The story of that system practically opens at the Roman conquest, though England was doubtless scored with roads in much earlier times. Before the Celts peopled our island there were at least tracks; and that the newcomers from the neighbouring continent could have traded and travelled from settlement to settlement without forming channels of communication is inconceivable. There are, indeed, many traces of early roads on the Berkshire downs, the wolds north of the Humber, and other high lands, to which the prehistoric population kept on account of their dryness and freedom from trees. Running along the ridges, and avoiding the valley bottoms, these roads (ridgeways) can be followed for miles, and from their direction in some cases it is certain that they were largely used at the outset of that migration from the heights to the low lands which still continues.

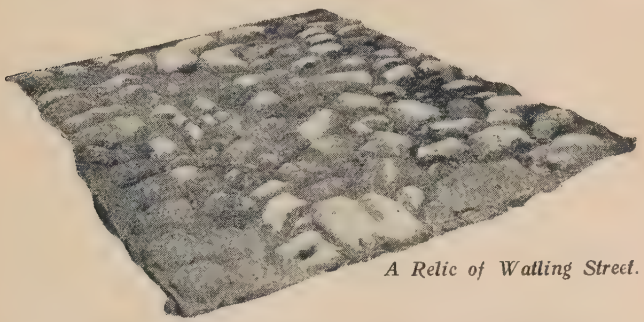
No less clear is it that the Britons possessed roads which, if primitive, were at all events practicable for wheeled traffic. This is deducible from their use of chariots, their ability

to concentrate them quickly at given spots, and their custom of sometimes fighting on foot and taking to them when they wished to beat a rapid retreat. It is true that we are told the dexterity of their charioteers was such as to excite the admiration of the Romans; but the utmost skill could not have availed to drive headlong where no roads existed. These were, in the circumstances, an absolute necessity.

While, however, there must have been many pre-Roman roads in this country, the first known system of highways was founded by the Latins. It was they who intersected England with broad, direct, well-engineered highways, and it was their work which formed the basis of our own system.

When the Romans invaded our island they pushed forward roads, at first to facilitate the campaigns of their generals, and subsequently in accordance with their methods of civilisation and administration, as well as to foster the growth of commerce, till, finally, their highways veined the whole country. Probably their engineers, in some cases, followed the course of British tracks, straightening them here and there, as more than sixteen centuries later the men engaged by turnpike trusts straightened "pack and prime ways," and made them suitable for wheeled traffic. Their lines, at any rate, were so well chosen that they are, for the most part, represented not only in our own highway system, but

in our network of railways. Thus, for instance, the old coaching road from London to Lincoln was mainly that along which Cæsar's legions swung, and the Great Northern line is nowhere far from it. The most marked exception to this rule, perhaps, is the Fosse, which is unaccompanied by modern road or railway, notwithstanding that it connects some important towns and is the shortest way from Lincoln to the



A Relic of Watling Street.

west. Generally, however, the Roman engineers took the lines imposed by the pre-eminence of London and still more by the physical features of the country, and their successors could not materially improve on those lines.

The most important roads of the Roman system were the "royal roads," or, as they are generally called in mediæval records, the Four Ways, which in the laws of Edward the Confessor[1] are given as Watling Street, the Fosse, Ermine Street, and Icknield Street, and of which it is said that

[1] D. Wilkins, "Leges Edwardi Regis," 100.

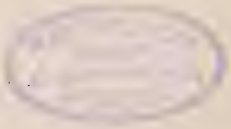
two run lengthways and two across the kingdom. These roads were known in Saxon times as the King's highways,[1] because they were protected by the King's peace, and any offence committed on them was "tried, not in the local court, where local influence might interfere with the administration of justice, but before the King's own officers."[2] But, though the Four Ways were thus privileged, they are not identified, and within a century after the Conquest we find much diversity of statement as to the channels of communication which had exclusively enjoyed the King's peace. The course of Watling Street alone was undisputed; that of the others was variously represented. Most of the monkish chroniclers followed Geoffrey of Monmouth, who makes Ermine Street run from St. David's to Southampton, Icknield Street from St. David's to Newcastle, and the Fosse from Totnes to Caithness. Perhaps the least fabulous is Robert of Gloucester:

> Fair weys many on ther ben in Englond,
> But four most of all ben zunderstond. . . .
> Fram the south into the north takit Erming strete;
> Fram the east into the west goeth Ikeneld strete;
> Fram south-est to north-west (that is sum del grete)
> Fram Dorer into Chestre go'th Watling strete;

[1] Hence "the King's highway" as a synonym for high road or for the road in general. "The two phrases 'the King's peace' and 'the King's highway' are, indeed, intimately connected; they come from a time when the King's protection was not universal, but particular, when the King's peace was not for all men or all places, and the King's highway was in a special manner protected by it."—Pollock and Maitland, "History of English Law," i. 22.

[2] Dr. Guest, *Archæological Journal*, xiv. 99.

"Icknield Street," near Alcester.
Ermine Street at Bayard's Leap.



Newport "Big Stone"
Radcot Bridge.

> The forth is most of all that tills from Toteneys—
> Fram the one end of Cornwall anon to Catenays—
> Fram the south to north-est into Englondes end
> Fosse men callith thisk voix.

These legends, the guesswork of modern antiquaries, and the vagaries of popular nomenclature combined have fastened the names of the Four Ways on roads to which they cannot possibly belong. Near Alcester there is an Icknield Street which is many miles from the course of the road properly so called; several roads bear the name of Ermine Street; there are at least four Watling Streets without any apparent connection whatever; and Fosses are numerous, though less so than they seem to have been in Defoe's time. Upon the Cotswold downs "we observed," he says, "how several cross-roads as ancient as the Fosse itself joined it or branched out of it; some of which the people have by ancient usage, tho' corruptly, called also Fosses: For Example, The Ackman Street, which is an ancient Saxon road, leading from Buckinghamshire through Oxfordshire to the Fosse and so to the Bath; this joins the Fosse between Burford and Cirencester. Also Grimes-dyke, from Oxfordshire, Wattle-bank, or Aves ditch, from the same, and the Would-way, called also the Fosse, crossing from Gloucester to Cirencester."[1] If, however, all guesses and myths be swept aside, no other conclusion can

[1] Defoe's "Tour," i. 273.

be come to than that the weight of evidence supports Elton's identification of the four roads.[1]

Watling Street, which ultimately had many branches, ran direct from the Kentish coast to Wroxeter, and thence northward in two sections to Carlisle and the neighbourhood of Newcastle. It was the road by which the Roman conquerors entered England, and a portion of it was that over which countless pilgrims travelled from London to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. To them its fame was such that they called the Milky Way after it. Chaucer notices the usage :

> " Now," quod he tho, " cast up thyn ye ;
> See yonder, lo, the Galaxye,
> Which men clepeth the Milky Wey,
> For hit is whyt : and somme, parfey,
> Callen hit Watlinge Strete."[2]

It is represented south of the Thames by the Dover Road, much of which is actually on the site of the street. Entering London by the Old Kent Road, it then probably joined other ways at or near London Stone, considered by Camden to have been a central *milliarium* similar to that in the Forum at Rome. London Stone stood on the south side of Cannon Street till 1742, when it was transferred to the other side

London Stone.

[1] " Origins of English History," 326-7.

[2] Chaucer's Works (Oxford, 1894), iii. 28. In Scotland the Milky Way is still popularly known as Watling Street, and in Norfolk it is commonly called the Walsingham Way. See *post*, p83.

of the channel, and subsequently it was built into the wall of St. Swithin's Church. The present Watling Street was never part of the ancient road. It was, Stow conjectures, "so named of the great high way of the same calling";[1] but it was properly, according to Leland, Atheling (or Noble) Street, and "Watling Street" appears not to have occurred before 1307.[2]

From London northward the course was on the line of Edgware Road, which is described as "Watling Street" in an inquisition of 2 Edward VI.[3] It then ran on *via* St. Albans to Weedon, Northamptonshire, from there to High Cross, and so to Wroxeter; but the road cannot now easily be followed further than Cannock Chase, though there are many traces of it between that district and the site of the Roman station Uriconium.

High Cross, where the Fosse intersects Watling Street, was an important point in the Roman road system, corresponding as it did, if not to the modern Crewe or York, at any rate to Basingstoke or Didcot. For many miles on each side of it Watling Street is now a fine highway, very different from what it was when Defoe passed over it in the early part of the eighteenth century. "This road," he says, "is not passable but just on the Middle of Summer, after the Coal Carriages have beaten the way; for as the ground

[1] Stow's "Survey" (ed. 1908), i. 346. [2] Ibid., ii. 352.
[3] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 2nd S. xxxvii. 579.

is a stiff clay, so, after rain, the water stands as in a ditch, and Horses sink into it up to their bellies."[1] Near the junction of the two great roads is a shattered column, all that remains of a memorial erected in 1712, at the joint expense of Leicestershire and Warwickshire, to mark that junction and the site of the Roman station Vennonæ, and also because the spot was "esteemed the centre of England." Defoe describes it as "a cross of an handsome design, but of mouldering stone, thro' the deceit of the architect," consisting of "four Dorick columns, regarding the four roads, with a gilded Globe and Cross at top, upon a Sundial."[2] It bore the inscription :

Pillar at High Cross.

> Traveller, if you seek the footsteps of the ancient Romans, here you may find them. Hence their most famous military ways, crossing one another, proceeded to the utmost limits of Britain. Here the Vennones had their settlement, and at the first mile along the street Claudius, the commander of a cohort, had his camp, and at the same distance along the Fosse his tomb.

The northern portions of Watling Street are, speaking generally, less important features of the countryside than those south of Cannock Chase, though it is not difficult to trace many leagues

[1] Defoe's "Tour," ii. 425. [2] Ibid., ii. 424.

of the once magnificent Imperial highway. Most interesting, perhaps, is the section from Manchester to Ilkley and Aldborough, which includes the finest specimen of a Roman paved road in this country. It is a causeway over Blackstone Edge. On the Lancashire side the foundation is of sand and rubble, in which are bedded setts of millstone grit, regularly laid in courses, convexly arched from side to side, and supported by kerbstones. These are in turn buttressed by two rows of setts, beyond which is the fosse. Down the middle of the road runs a line of large blocks of millstone, which are grooved in such a way that they form a continuous channel. Similar trough stones appear on the Yorkshire side, where the work is known as the "Devil's Causeway." The channel is the distinctive and peculiar part of the road, and its object has given rise to much speculation. It has been suggested that the groove was made by packhorses' feet; but the evenness of the hollowed portion of many stones in succession makes such a hypothesis wholly untenable. The most probable theory, perhaps, is that the channel was formed for skidding vehicles as they descended the hill, the average gradient of which is 1 in 7, though for a short distance it is as steep as 1 in 5.

The Fosse, the second of the ways mentioned in the laws of the Confessor, ran diagonally across

England, from Lincoln through Newark, Leicester, Cirencester, and Bath to Devon or Cornwall. Though now, on the whole, an unimportant road, the Warwickshire portion being mostly grass-grown track, it can still be followed from Lincoln to a few miles beyond South Petherton, in Somerset; but then its course becomes uncertain, though it probably continued to Muridunum, which was probably at the mouth of the Axe, near Seaton.

A peculiarity connected with the Fosse is the number of place-names derived from it. Fosse Cross, Fosse Bridge, Fosse Knowl, Stretton-under-Fosse, and several Strettons-on-the-Fosse are all on its line. It is remarkable, too, for the extent to which it forms the boundary between parishes, townships, and counties. The Saxons commonly employed the ridges of Roman roads as dividing lines between their settlements, and consequently it is to be expected that such highways will mark boundaries. But in this respect the Fosse is exceptional. For nearly the whole of its course through the Cotswolds it forms the boundary of parishes; between Cirencester and Bath parishes terminate on it almost continuously for twenty-two miles; at Marshfield, where was a Roman station, it bears on its margin the Three Shire Stones, which mark where Gloucester, Somerset, and Wiltshire meet; and near Moreton-in-the-Marsh it runs close to the

Four-Shire Stone, which is reputed to stand in the counties of Oxford, Gloucester, Warwick and Worcester. There are charters in which the Fosse is mentioned as a boundary near Baltonsborough, Somerset, in 744, near Evenlode in 779, and near Malmesbury in 931. It occurs more frequently in such instruments than even Watling Street, though that way is the first Roman road specified in an historical document draw up in post-Roman times. It is named in the treaty of Wedmore, defining the boundary between the dominions of Alfred and Guthrum, which was made in 878, four and a half centuries after the departure of the Romans from our shores.

The third of the Four Ways, Ermine Street, led directly from London to Lincoln, with a section to Doncaster and York. From London to Coltersworth the old North Road is on the site of Ermine Street, which then passes through Cold Harbour[1] to Ancaster, one of the "Castra stations" for a permanent garrison, and the scene of the finding of many Roman remains, including a milestone and a parcel of 2,000 coins. Thence the street runs through Bayard's Leap to Lincoln, though beyond Bayard's Leap it rapidly degenerates, and ultimately becomes a mere track. In Lincolnshire it is variously known as "High Dyke,"

[1] This name frequently occurs on or near Roman roads. There are more than fifty Cold Harbours in England, and "Caldecot" and "Windy Arbour," both names of similar meaning, are also common. The association has inspired many recondite derivations of "Cold Harbour," which, however, probably marks nothing more than a place of shelter—a harbour or refuge from the cold.

"Old Street," and the "London Ramper." The last word, obviously derived from the rampart of Roman roads, is applied locally to any main road, but more particularly to one made by the Latin invaders.

Lastly, Icknield Street was the great cross-country road. Its English name, derived from the Iceni, links it with the eastern parts of the country that that great clan occupied, and the many place-names beginning with "Ick," as Ickborough (Norfolk), Ickingham (Suffolk), Ickleton (Cambs.), and Ickford (Herts.), indicate its course, which was from Norfolk to Dunstable and thence to Southampton. It was at a remote period the only, and for centuries after, the principal[1] approach to Thetford, where its line is marked by a modern road carried by three bridges, known as the "Nuns' Bridges," over the Thet, a nameless rivulet, and the Little Ouse. In the name formerly borne by one of these bridges, the "Incelland Bridge," there is at least a suggestion of that of the ancient way. From Thetford Icknield Street strikes westward passing many relics of the ancient Britons, and ultimately leading to the greatest of all, Stonehenge itself. For this reason, coupled with the absence of ancient towns and of Roman remains along its course, Dr. Guest[1] lends the weight of his authority to the contention that it was a

[1] *Archæological Journal*, xiv. 116-18.

British trackway; and there can be no question that of the Four Ways it is most likely to have been in existence at the time of Cæsar's first invasion.

Unlike the other three roads, Icknield Street is not largely represented by modern highways. It survives, for the most part, as a green track, which, though here and there, as from Watlington to Princes Risborough, bounded by hedges, generally runs across open country. This aloofness may, perhaps, have tended to perpetuate an old tradition, which is current in several forms, one stating that the street extends from sea to sea, and another that it runs all round England. In Hertfordshire there is a widespread belief in the vast length of "Akneel Way," as the ancient track is called; but a similar myth is more or less common along many parts of its course.[1]

Besides the Four Ways, there were many other splendid highways in the Roman system. Akeman Street, which shares with the Fosse the distinction of having a railway station named after it, was an important cross-country road, and Ryknield Street, often confused with Icknield Street, though it was, in fact, a separate road, also ran breadthways of the country. There was, too, a group of roads from London to Silchester and

[1] As early as the beginning of the twelfth century each of the Four Ways was popularly supposed to run from sea to sea. Though the notion was handed down till comparatively recent times, Icknield Street is now almost exclusively credited with so great a length.

the west that must have borne a great deal of traffic. It is quite possible that the Four Ways may not have differed much either in breadth or surface from numbers of roads less known to us.

From the remains of the Four Ways, and from those of minor ways which formed part of the same stupendous system, may be deduced the characteristics of Roman roads in general. That they were, first and foremost, straight has often been insisted upon, and this is doubtless the most obvious feature of the principal Roman roads (as seen on a map) now in use, particularly the Fosse, no part of which in the length still remaining (182 miles) is more than six miles from an absolutely straight line. It would, however, be more accurate to say that the Roman engineers avoided curves, and, instead of going round a hill, morass, or other obstacle with a half-circle, swerved gradually to one side or the other, and picked up their line again when the difficult spot was passed. Sometimes, indeed, they took a zig-zag course, proceeding straight from point to point, but not necessarily from station to station. An example of their methods can be seen in the road from Lincoln to York. If they had gone as the crow flies, they would have connected the two places with fifty-five miles of highway; but, as the swamps of Humberhead would have had to be crossed, they struck inland, and so added seventeen miles to the distance.

About the surface of Roman roads there is less scope for dogmatism. It seems to have varied, though we do know that in many cases it was paved. In Stukeley's time part of Ermine Street north of Huntingdon was still so, and on the Fosse south of Ilchester there was a paving "composed of the flat quarry stones of the country, of a good breadth, laid edgewise," and so close that it looked "like the side of a wall broken down."[1] Stukeley saw, also, a pavement, which was "very manifest, of great blue flag stones laid edgewise very carefully," for several miles on the Fosse near Willoughby-in-the-Wolds; and he notes that "they preserve a report still that it was thus paved all the way from Newark to Leicester."[2] To the same effect is the testimony of Camden, who describes the Sussex Stone Street as being paved with stone.[3]

Nor is it certain that only the principal roads were paved; for we have still numerous paved roads which could never have been great arteries of traffic. Many examples remain in the Forest of Dean, where the Latin conquerors worked extensive mines, and whence they had roads to Gloucester, Monmouth, Lydney, and Caerwent. The pavement in this district consists, as a rule, of cubes of millstone grit 8in. or 10in. square, with kerbstones about 5in. wide and from 10in. to 20in. in length.

[1] "Itinerarium Curiosum" (1776), 155. [2] Ibid., 106. [3] "Britannia," i. 321.

The general construction of Roman roads doubtless varied greatly, mainly because the engineers used the materials at hand, and because, therefore, the factors frequently changed. Ways of the first class were, in general, of immense solidity, as the shovel and the pickaxe, those invaluable auxiliaries in the "reconstruction" of bygone civilisations, have demonstrated again and again. In 1881 a portion of the Fosse south of Radstock was opened up and the following structure shown:

1. Foundation of fine earth, hard beaten in.
2. Large stones, some bedded in mortar.
3. Small stones well mixed with mortar.
4. Lime, chalk, and powdered brick or tile, or gravel, sand, and lime with clay.
5. Pavement. "The stones were all sizes and shapes, the lime having been probably poured in afterwards. In this way the whole surface of the road was so finely cemented together that in removing it . . . the stones more frequently split through the solid than separated at a joint."[1]

A discovery in 1897 further illustrated the remarkably substantial character of the Roman engineers' work. During the carrying out of an undertaking at Rochester there was unearthed a magnificent causeway which had formed part of Watling Street, and by which had been crossed the mud on the Strood side of the Medway. In

[1] "Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society's Proceedings," xxx. 76.

the structure were these strata:

1. Marsh mud, containing numerous oak piles about 4ft. long and braced together with timber cills.

2. Flints, rough pieces of Kentish rag, and fragments of Roman tile.

3. Rammed chalk.

4. Flints, broken fine.

5. Small pebble gravel, mixed with block earth, rammed.

6. Pavement, composed of Kentish rag of polygonal shape. The width was about 14ft., and from the grooves in it the track of the wagons was estimated at $4\frac{1}{2}$ft.[1]

Less important roads, if they lacked so fine a substratum, were certainly of a durable nature. Not far from Chat Moss, near Manchester, there is a work which shows two principles of Roman construction over a morass. The foundation is of brushwood, which supports a layer of sand forming the bed of the pavement. This is about 18ft. wide, and consists of large stones, supported along the sides, not by kerbstones, but by stakes buried deep in the peat beneath. The use of wood in similar circumstances was not uncommon. A curious instance is recorded from Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire. In 1762 the chase or forest in that town, according to a local antiquary, furnished "fuel to the poor in-

[1] G. Payne, *Archæologia Cantiana*, xxiii. 4-6.

habitants from a magazine of peat near the Roman road[1] . . . composed of the rotted branches of some thousands of fir trees, cut down by the Romans to enable them to pass over a morass there." The bodies of the trees were "sometimes dug up sound, with the marks of the axe upon them, which," comments the writer, "effectually confutes the opinion of those who suppose they have lain there ever since Noah's deluge."[2] Another interesting construction was shown by a road at Haydock, Lancashire. The foundation was of rude masses of sandstone built up together, and was covered with a thick bed of gravel, while in some places the sod had been previously removed and a layer of sand spread below.

Altogether, the Roman road system, constructed as it was by a power with illimitable resources and prodigal alike of time and labour, was the greatest engineering work ever carried out in this country in pre-railway times. It is impressive even now, and must have been immeasurably more so when it was in perfect condition and when the bridges, viaducts, embankments, etc., which originally formed part of it were still in existence. So great an achievement ought never to have been allowed to fall into decay; it ought to have furnished not only an obvious and a permanent

[1] The road is a continuation of the "Icknield Street" near Alcester. It can be traced from Stow-on-the-Wold through that town to Wall, and is plainly visible in Sutton Park, where till recent years it formed the county boundary. No doubt it was a link between the Fosse and Watling Street. If, as seems indisputable, it was part of Ryknield Street, there is no difficulty in accounting for its present name.

[2] *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxxii. 403.

The Four Shire Stone, near Moreton-in-the-Marsh.
The Three Shire Stones, Marshfield.

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memorial of the Roman dominion, but an example to be sedulously followed in road-making. But, instead of being kept in repair and added to as needs arose, it was neglected, pillaged for building material, and in parts ploughed up, and heavy was the penalty the country had to pay for such colossal folly.

CHAPTER II.

Mediæval Roads and Bridges.

In mediæval times provision for easy and safe transit was much less adequate than it had been during the Roman era. Though the roads constructed by the Latins at so vast a cost and with such splendid engineering skill remained in use, there was no regular provision for their maintenance, and other channels of communication which were made as occasion arose, besides mostly falling far short of the structural standard set by the invaders, were so ill-kept as to be at times impassable. In all matters connected with highways, indeed, there was a laxity strangely out of keeping with the needs of the times and such as would have been impossible under even the Tudor or Stuart kings.

Comparatively few new roads were made during the Middle Ages, and of those which were added to the ways constructed by the Romans most are now unidentifiable, having been long since adapted to wheeled traffic. Some of the numerous "Devil's Causeways," however, seem to date from this period and to have been altered very little, if at all. One near Church Stretton has some interesting features. Branching from a Roman road on the west of the Severn, it runs

Bridge on the Devil's Causeway, near Church Stretton.
Harold's Bridge, Waltham Abbey.

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through Acton Burnell and Rushbury to Tugford and Nordybank Camp, on the Brown Clee Hills. In its course it is carried over a small stream by a rude bridge and passes a beautiful spring, the "Roman Well." It is paved with a local grit-stone, which plainly extends right across the road at Causeway Wood Farm; but in general the

The "Devil's Causeway," near Church Stretton.

paving crops out only here and there. The arch-stones of the bridge (popularly known as the "Devil's Bridge") are roughly trimmed or unhewn, while the joints on the underside appear to be destitute of mortar.

Road maintenance was considered a work of piety rather than a public duty. All land was subject to three contributions, the *trinoda necessitas*, one of which, the *bryge-bot*, was for

keeping bridges and high roads in repair; and this obligation was not unjust, because it was the farmer's wagons that cut up the roads, and still more because the land stood to profit most from good highways. But, in practice, the liability was commonly evaded, and the maintenance of roads, except those over which manorial rights were exercised, largely depended upon the monasteries and the charity of the faithful.

This was given in no scant measure. The Church taught that the amendment of highways was a pious work of much the same merit as visiting the sick, and that gifts for this purpose were little less pleasing in the sight of God than those to herself. She continually urged the faithful, also, to leave money for mending the roads, and declared that those who did so were worthy of remembrance: "Ye shall praye . . . for men and women which briggeis or way makyth or mendith."[1] Further to stimulate people to such good work, Richard de Kellawe, Bishop of Durham, granted indulgences to all who heeded the Church's behest. Forty days were allowed for help towards the building and repair of Botyton Bridge, and a like period in respect to the road and causeway between Billingham and Norton, as well as to the "great road" from Brotherton to Ferrybridge, the indulgences applying not only to those who contributed money,

[1] Surtees Society, lxiii. 224.

but to such of the poor as could give nothing but bodily labour.[1] Indulgences were similarly granted by John Fordham, Bishop of Ely, to the faithful who assisted in the repair of the road between Cambridge and Trumpington.[2]

Because of this teaching, and because the clergy made most of the wills, and could, consequently, remind a testator of the duty he owed to the poor traveller, bequests for the repair of highways were common in mediæval times. In general, they were in money and for particular roads. Thus, we find that Edmund Brudenell, of Agmondesham, in 1451 left "to the reparation of the high way to Aylesbury and Wendover, xlL." ;[3] and it may be gleaned from a document connected with Lapworth, Warwickshire, that a similar bequest was intended to be secured on parish cows. The document is a copy of an impeachment of a feofee (William Askewe) whose conduct was being inquired into by a commission. It runs: "William Ashby, deceased, gave ij kyne to be let after the decease of his heire by y^{E} churchwardens at 20^{d} a cow by the yere, the one 20^{d} unto y^{e} mending of y^{e} heighway betwixt prats pit & the pinfold & y^{e} other unto y^{e} poore of Lapworth. William Askewe maried his widow that had these kyne in ano 1595 in Julij, since wch time there hath bine no money

[1] "Registrum Palatinum Dunelmense," i. 506, 507, 615, 641.
[2] C. H. Cooper, "Annals of Cambridge," i. 146. [3] "Testamenta Vetusta," i. 282.

payd unto the heigway nor y^e^ poore nor the kyne delivered unto y^e^ churchwardens to be lett unto poore men upon suertie according to the donors will."[1]

But sometimes bequests were for the repair of unspecified roads, the money to be spent on those which should be deemed most in need of amendment. In 1505 Sir Henry Colet, citizen and alderman of London, threw the responsibility of selecting such highways on his executors, directing them as he did to dispose of £100 in repairing "noyous ways where they should think most needful and most meritorious" for his soul.[2] In a few cases, too, bequests were in kind, testators leaving gravel or other material for the repair of roads. An instance occurred at Denton, Kent, in 1499, when one John Bolt gave to the "reparacion of the hie way defectyf a yens the parsonage of Denton" ten loads of stone, as well as other ten loads to make good the highway between Denton and Milton.[3]

Guilds contributed largely to the maintenance of the roads. At Birmingham the Guild of the Holy Cross, founded under Richard II., did such good work that two centuries after its establishment the Commissioners of Edward VI. favourably reported on it. The brotherhood, it was stated, "mainteigned . . . and kept in good Reparaciouns two greate stone bridges and diuers

[1] R. Hudson, "Memorials of a Warwickshire Parish," 109-10.
[2] "Testamenta Vetusta," ii. 481. [3] "Testamenta Cantiana," 21.

ffoule and daungerous high wayes, the charge whereof the towne of hitsellfe ys not hable to mainteign; so that the Lacke thereof wilbe a great noysaunce to the King's Ma^ties^ subiects passing to and from the marches of wales and an vtter Ruyne to the same towne."[1] Equally mindful of the wayfarer was the Guild of Hatfield Brodoke, Essex; and at Abingdon the Fraternity of the Holy Cross not only maintained the bridge over the Thames, but kept in repair the road from the town to the cathedral of Dorchester. In Bristol, Rochester, and other towns similar confraternities likewise befriended the traveller.

Nor were the clergy backward in helping to provide passable channels of communication. Practising what they preached, they gave of their means towards the maintenance of the highways. A particularly generous benefactor to the traveller was William of Wykeham, who at his own cost repaired many roads, including the one from Winchester to his palace in Southwark, and constructed a number of bridges and causeways.

Monasteries also amended the roads, and minor religious foundations deemed it incumbent on them to keep their frontages passable. The traveller was thus helped on his way even by the numerous leper hospitals, relics of which still border the King's highway, as, for instance, at Newport, Essex. On the out-

[1] Toulmin Smith, "English Guilds," 249.

skirts of this village is a huge glacial boulder, known as "Newport Big Stone," on which mediæval travellers placed alms for the inmates of a leper hospital. Founded in the reign of King John, and dedicated to Saints Mary and Leonard, the institution occupied the site of "Chapel Farm," a picturesque structure near the boulder, and some stones from the ancient building are said to be incorporated in the garden wall facing the road. Such foundations were largely dependent on the charity of travellers, and this alone furnished a powerful motive for the work they did on the highways.

Bridges were built with the same intent as roads were repaired, as an act of piety, and consequently they often made some appeal to the faithful. Many bore, as Radcot Bridge is said to have borne, a religious statue. In the middle of this rude structure over the Thames, traditionally referred to the thirteenth century, is a niche which is believed to have supported a figure of the Virgin. On other bridges were appeals for prayers for the souls of their founders. Let into the wall of one at Stockbridge, Hants, was a brass plate, inscribed: "Say of your cheryte a pater noster and a Ave for the Sowllys of John Gylmyn otherwise seyd Lokke and Richard Gater and Margrete, the wyf of the forsayd John and Richard, founderys and makerys of ỿ yñ sayd Bryge yñ whos sowllys

God have mercy."[1] The request on a plate from a bridge of much later date which spanned the Teme at Stanford, Worcestershire, shows that this custom continued to Tudor times. It is as follows: "Pray for Humphrey Pakynton, Esq., born in Stanford, whyche payde for the workmanshepe and makeing of this brygg—the wyche was rered and mayed the 1st day of May, and in the 1st year of the rayne of King Edward the Sixth."[2]

The pious character of such works was still more markedly shown by erecting on them chapels which seem to have served as resting places for travellers as well as for purposes of devotion. London Bridge was hallowed in the eyes of pilgrims by a chantry dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury, and on many bridges of lesser importance there was like provision for wayfarers. An early example, founded as it was about the second decade of the thirteenth century, formed a prominent feature of the Ouse Bridge, York. At the Dissolution it shared the fate of the other religious houses in the city, and afterwards descended to secular uses, becoming in turn a school, an exchange for merchants, a record office, and the chamber of the common council, while the crypt was turned into a "kid-cote" (prison for felons). It did not disappear till 1810, when the whole structure was demolished.

[1] Gatehouse, MS. history in Hartley Institute Library, Southampton, quoted by D. H. Moutray Read, "Highways and Byways in Hampshire," p. 235.
[2] *Notes and Queries*, 4th S. ix. 308.

Some bridge chapels survive to the present day. At Rotherham there is one which dates from the fifteenth century, and is now a tobacconist's shop, after having been successively an almshouse and a gaol. Bradford-on-Avon also possesses a bridge chapel which has had many vicissitudes. The last part it played was that of a "round house," or lock-up. Another building of the same class rises high above the bridge at St. Ives, Huntingdon. Dedicated to St. Leger, Bishop of Verdun in the seventh century, it passed at the Dissolution to Robert Huchyns, the last Prior of St. Ives, who was granted a pension of £12, "besyde the chapell and chamber stonding vpon the brygge." In 1689 the upper part suffered in a great fire which destroyed much of the town, and was afterwards rebuilt; and the whole "chappell and chamber" have since, it is said, been a Roman Catholic chapel, a hostelry, and a dwelling-house.

But the most remarkable relic of this character now remaining is "the right goodley chapel of Our Lady," as Leland described it, on the bridge over the Calder, at Wakefield. A beautiful Decorated structure of the fourteenth century, when a charter enacted that "ten pounds per annum be settled on William Kaye and William Bull and their successors for ever to perform Divine service," it is unique in that it is perfect and that the founders' wishes are still carried out.

The maintenance of bridges was much less fortuitous than that of roads. Many of the structures were endowed by their builders, or, like London Bridge and Bristol Bridge, bore shops and houses, and thus contributed to their own upkeep. A survival of these picturesque works is Lincoln High Bridge, which retains its houses on one side. In some cases, again, gifts to bridges were so numerous as to be ample for their support. The bridge at Burton, according to Shaw,[1] was for many years entirely maintained by bequests, one of which was made by Dame Alice Bolde, who in 1426 left to it two silver spoons, as well as other two for the sustentation of the ferry boat at Stapenhill. Money, moreover, was frequently collected at bridges, sometimes as tolls, but more often as gifts. Offerings made by pilgrims at chantries were a recognised means of maintaining the bridges on which shrines stood, together with the neighbouring causeways.

Much was done, therefore, towards the upkeep of roads and bridges. But it was not without good reason that the traveller was generally commiserated. In and about towns his neck was endangered by the vile roads, which were almost

[1] "History of Staffordshire," i. 15. Shaw quotes an appeal "to all true Xten people," by the abbot of Burton and others, and dated 20 Henry VIII. The signatories, after stating that Burton Bridge "now of late days by the occasion of grett floddys and waters is greatly decayed," in "the way of charyte exorte, move, and requere" such people to give alms towards its maintenance, "wherby ye may deserve the grett reward of Almighty God, to the helth and comfort of your own soules, and our full hertye thankys."

invariably ill-kept and sometimes full of holes and sloughs. In 1474 the Corporation of Canterbury, in a petition to Parliament for a private Act, or its equivalent, authorising them to pave their streets, said that pilgrims carried to all parts of the world a report of the "noyous" state of such sheets;[1] and, though the powers asked for were granted, the fact that William Benet, a citizen, in or about the year 1495, left "for paving of the streets from St. Andrew's to the Pillory, that the people may go the cleaner thereto, xl.,"[2] indicates that the improvement was only of a temporary nature. At Beverley, where there seems to have been the same trouble, the governors ultimately imposed certain restrictions on traffic. In 1367 they forbade "carts shod with iron" to enter the town, on pain of a fine of 12d., and two years later renewed this order and extended it to wagons, which were to be fined 2s. for every offence. It was further decreed in 1418 that "porters and creelmen and other common carriers" should "carry on horses in creels and sacks, and not on sleds, under a penalty of 3s. 4d."[3]

Still more vexatious was the road problem in London and its environs. Not only were carts with iron-tyred wheels forbidden, except upon reasonable cause, to enter the city, but several special measures were adopted with a view to mending certain roads which were in a particu-

[1] 9th Report Com. His. MSS., i. 168. [2] "Testamenta Vetusta," i. 427.
[3] "Beverley Town Documents" (Selden Society), 21, 24.

larly bad state. By a patent of 1353, the highway from Temple Bar to Westminster, which had "become very dangerous for men and carriages," was paved and the cost recovered by a tax on all merchandise going to the staple at Westminster.[1] Other patents were granted later for the same road, which was frequently described as "ruinous." In 1356, also, an order was made for improving the highways leading to London from all directions. It recites that people who "bring victuals and wares" complain "that they incur great damage, and are oftentimes in peril of losing what they bring, and sometimes do lose it, because that the roads without the gates of the City are so torn up and the pavement so broken," and then imposes a tax on carts and horses entering the city, except those of "great people and other folks that bring their own victuals or other goods."[2]

If such was the state of things in Canterbury and Beverley and just outside the gates of London, we may assume that in and about towns of lesser wealth the road was indeed a problem. After making all allowance for the difference in traffic, it seems clear that the highways under the control of urban communities were at least as decayed at this period as they unquestionably were in Tudor times.

Bad as roads were in towns, however, they were still worse in the open country. Founda-

[1] Rymer (1708), v. 774. [2] Riley, "Memorials of London," 291.

tions they had none; tufts of grass broke up their surface; unbridged rills and streams ran across them, spreading over their course after heavy rains and at times submerging them for miles; and at best they were thick with dust in summer and with mud in winter. Sometimes, indeed, their state was such that even men who were well clothed and provided with good horses could not attend to the most urgent affairs except at the peril of their lives. In consequence of the condition of the roads, the majority of members summoned to Parliament in 1339 were unable to obey the royal command, and it was necessary to announce to the few who had arrived at Westminster that "because the prelates, earls, barons, and other lords and knights of the shires, citizens and burgesses of cities and boroughs, are so troubled by the bad weather, that they could not arrive that day, it would be proper to await their coming."[1]

But the most conclusive evidence of the vileness of rural roads is that permanent provision was made to save people from journeying over them, sometimes even for short distances. Oratories were licensed in private houses and chapels of ease built, that villagers might not be exposed to perils in reaching their parish churches, and in 1373 Bristol was constituted a county to spare burgesses from travelling to Gloucester and Ilchester, "distant," says the charter

[1] "Rolls of Parliament," ii. 107.

of 47 Edward III., by which the privilege was granted, "thirty miles of road, deep, especially in winter time, and dangerous to passengers."

Bridges also were, with some conspicuous exceptions, a sore trial to wayfarers. Notwithstanding their endowments, tolls, and other sources of revenue, they were in general so badly maintained, and travellers were subjected to such exactions at them, that they gave rise to constant trouble and litigation. Again and again the contemporary history of a bridge, so far as we know it, is very similar to that of Queen Matilda's famous foundation (eleventh century) at Stratford, which was before the courts for year after year.

Matilda, having seen the danger of passing the river at Old Ford—"for she herself had," says Stow, "beene well washed in the water"—built two bridges a mile apart, and connected them with a gravelled causeway. For the maintenance of her foundation, she granted land and a water mill to the Abbess of Barking, who, on the death of the Queen, transferred the property, with the obligation attached, to the head of an abbey for men at Stratford. The abbot soon tired of the duty, and ultimately delegated it to one Humphrey Pratt, promising to make him an annual grant. After the compact had been carried out by both parties for a long time, the abbot, seeing that Pratt was prospering from the alms bestowed

on him by travellers, withdrew his pension. Pratt retaliated by setting up iron bars, and demanding tolls from all except the nobility, "whom through fear," according to an inquisition of Edward I., "he permitted quietly to pass." Litigation ensued, and was carried on till the reign of Edward II., when the Abbot of Stratford took back the charge transferred to him by the Abbess of Barking.[1]

In general, mediæval bridges were so neglected that the examples which have come down to us were mostly endowed, abbatial property, cared for by guilds, or otherwise specially maintained. A few of these are particularly noteworthy. One of the oldest is Harold's (or Stoney) Bridge, at Waltham Abbey, a structure built by the religious house founded there in 1177. The whole of the parapet and face is gone, and the arch now contains only three ribs, which are broad and chamfered, with lead-bound joggles. From it in summer can be traced, by the brown grass, the ancient ways which led to the abbey farm, where stood a tithe barn of noble dimensions. A later bridge (fourteenth century) spans the Coquet at Warkworth, and is interesting as an

Seal of the Guild of the Holy Cross, Birmingham.

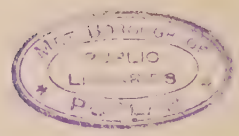
[1] *Archæologia*, xxvii. 77.

example of the type constructed with some regard to defence, a fortified gatehouse, with a segmental vaulted archway, standing at the south end. Another variety of mediæval bridges is worthily represented by a narrow, high-pitched structure near Danby Castle, Yorkshire. It is locally known as Duck Bridge, from the name of the man who last repaired it; but it was built in the fourteenth century by Neville, Lord Latimer, whose arms it still bears.

In consequence of the wretched state of bridges, there were many complaints of the tolls demanded at them, travellers not unnaturally demurring to pay for the use of a structure which they could not cross without danger to life or limb. Ultimately this form of taxation seems to have been generally looked upon as a public grievance; for about the end of the fifteenth century we find several bequests to free bridges. In this way Thomas, Earl of Derby, was particularly charitable to the traveller. By his will, made in 1504, he left "to the making [of] Garstang Bridge, xx*l.*; to the purchase of the rent and toll of Werington Bridge, ccc. marks, to the intent that the pass shall be free for all people for ever; and also for the making of the said bridge, D. marks, that no further toll or farm be there asked."[1] A portion of the stream of charity was, in fact, diverted from roads towards preventing exactions at bridges.

[1] "Testamenta Vetusta," ii. 459.

Clearly, therefore, care for internal communication diminished greatly during the Middle Ages. The badness of roads subsequent to the disruption of the monasteries has been attributed to that event ;[1] but, though it was doubtless intensified thereby, there can be no question that it began centuries before. If the pious character of the work on highways may, as M. Jusserand[2] suggests, "suffice to prove that the roads were not so safe or in such a good state as has been sometimes maintained," then the decay of the roads can certainly be traced back to the eleventh century. In any case, there were complaints of bad roads at that period, if not in earlier times. Probably our highway system, as a whole, steadily deteriorated from the departure of the Romans.



[1] T. Rogers, "Agriculture and Prices," iv. 114, 217.
[2] "English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages," 38.

Memorial to Sir Edwin Rich at Attleborough.
Inscription on causeway at Godmanchester.

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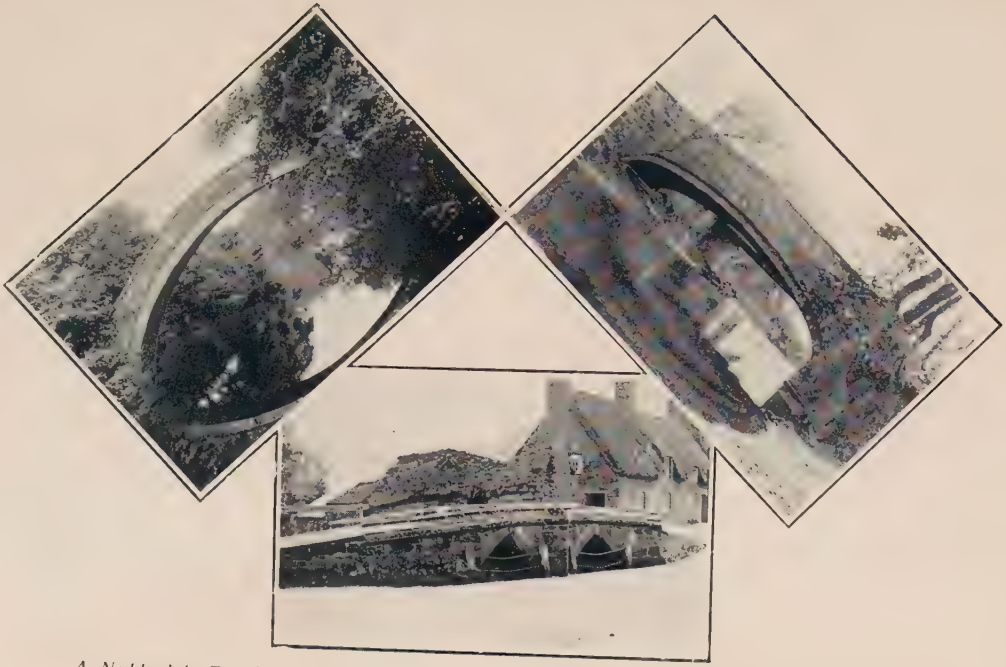

A Nidderdale Packhorse Bridge. *An Historic Bridge at Aldin Grange, near Durham.*
Packhorse Bridge at Charwelton.

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The Ouse Bridge, York. From an old print

CHAPTER III.

Philanthropy and the Road.

If the teaching and practice of the mediæval Church with regard to roads did not have the desired effect, they ultimately contributed in no small measure to the improvement of the King's highway. Many works of lasting utility were carried out during the Middle Ages by pious benefactors, and additions to them were frequently made till comparatively recent times. At the Reformation the old doctrine was generally discarded ; road maintenance ceased to be looked upon as one of the things conducive to salvation. But so "noyous and jeopardes" did the highways remain, and so well established had become the custom of voluntarily assisting in their amendment, that gifts to them continued to be made, and some of these also engendered undertakings which proved boons to generations of wayfarers.

Maud Heath's Column.

In numerous cases, indeed, the benefits of charity bestowed on the roads still continue. We in our day profit as a result of the solicitude that

our pious ancestors showed for the wayfarer, and sometimes, moreover, to a degree far greater than they could have foreseen.

Scattered over the country are many of the causeways made by such old-time benefactors. There is one at Godmanchester, Hunts., which was designed to remedy evils from which the founder had suffered in his own person. Robert Cooke, a native of that town, while travelling from Godmanchester to Huntingdon in time of flood, was nearly drowned. On his death he left some property for the making and maintenance of a causeway, and the present excellent road, which dates from 1784, and is about 810ft. in length, is the outcome of his bequest. Cooke's gift is commemorated by an inscription on the wall of the bridge over the backwater. It records that, having escaped the danger of drowning, he consecrated the work in 1637 for the benefit of travellers.

Doubtless a causeway between Chippenham and the village of Bremhill was prompted by similar adventures. Its founder was Maud Heath, a pedlar woman, of Langley Burrell. A regular traveller between Bremhill and Chippenham with butter, eggs, and other produce, she had to go through the low-lying valley of the Avon, which, frequently flooded even now in the winter, must often have been impassable in her time, about the middle of the fifteenth

century. She died in 1474, and left land and houses, the income therefrom to be applied to constructing and maintaining a causeway from Wick Hill to Chippenham.

The causeway, which was made in accordance with her directions, and has since been extended from the surplus funds, passes through Wick, East Tytherton, Kellaways, and Langley Burrell, and is about five miles in length. It is mostly a flagged path raised only slightly above the highway; but at Kellaways, the lowest point along its course, it is carried on arches over the river Avon, and here, at the most imposing part of the causeway, stands a sundial, inscribed:

> To the memory of the worthy Maud Heath,. of Langley Burrell, widow,
>
> Who in the year of Grace 1474 for the good of Travellers did in Charity bestow in Land and houses about Eight pounds a year forever to be laid out on the Highways and Causey leading from Wick Hill to Chippenham Clift.
>
> This Piller was set up by the feofees in 1698.
> Injure me not.

It appears from this that a part of the bequest was to be devoted to the upkeep of the highway; but the fame of the old pedlar rests on the causeway alone. For more than 350 years the sundial was, with the exception of some Latin inscriptions at various parts of the path, her only memorial. About 1830, however, the Rev. W. L. Bowles, the then incumbent of Bremhill, came to the conclusion that justice had not been done

to the public-spirited old lady, and moved himself to erect a prominent monument to her. As a result, a column, surmounted by a life-size figure of the worthy Maud, was in 1838 set on Wick Hill at the joint expense of its promoter, the trustees, and Lord Lansdowne. Maud is represented in a sitting posture, grasping in her right hand an oaken staff and with a basket (supposed to contain eggs) near her left hand. The likeness, however, is purely imaginary, as a portrait of the public-spirited pedlar woman was unobtainable. A further curiosity is on the pedestal in the form of some verse by the Rev. W. L. Bowles, whose name appears again a little higher up. It begins:

> Thou, who do'st pause on this aerial height,
> Where Maud Heath's Pathway winds in shade and light:
> Christian wayfarer in a world of strife,
> Be still—and ponder on the Path of Life.

Some of the clergyman's rhymes are also on the path itself. The Chippenham end is marked by the lines:

> Hither extendeth Maud Heath's gift,
> For where I stand is Chippenham Clift.

From the proceeds of the trust, now amounting to about £300 a year, the causeway is kept in good repair.

Similar, albeit smaller, works in other parts of the country are numerous. A causeway of a curious character, constructed by Dame Margaret Hobart, wife of Sir James Hobart, Attorney-

General to Henry VII., stretches over the marshes from Haddiscoe to St. Olave's Bridge, the predecessor of which was also the good dame's gift. Another causeway connects the two Barringtons, in Gloucestershire. There is, again, a like provision at Steventon, Berks. A pitched path raised several feet above the surrounding country, it

Maud Heath's Causeway.

flanks the green, and is maintained, according to a tablet in the church, " by two sisters, by ancient report " ; but, though these ladies may have bequeathed some money for its upkeep, it was probably made by the Black Monks, who had a priory at Steventon.

These and other causeways must have been boons indeed when the roads were quagmires or impassable because the " waters were out." Many

of them, in fact, have not yet outlasted their utility; for in wet winters they are still travelled over by numbers of people who but for their aid would not reach home dry-footed.

Causeway at Steventon.

For some of our roads we are no less indebted to private individuals. A conspicuous instance is the byway which branches off the Devizes-Andover road to Cannings and Etchilhampton, because at the junction stands a tall pillar,

surmounted by a lion rampant, bearing witness to the circumstances in which it was created. On this memorial is a long inscription, setting forth that it was erected in 1771 to "James Long, whose publick spirit was remarkably exerted in planning, promoting, and compleating this new road An. Dom. 1678, by which a former tedious and dangerous way over the adjacent hill is avoided, to the great convenience and pleasure of travellers." The recognition of James Long's public spirit was, besides obviously belated, somewhat scanty, since the money subscribed was insufficient to carry out the original intention of enclosing the monument in railings.

It was by private enterprise that several roads near Matlock were made, mostly in the early part of the eighteenth century. About 1738, in particular, there was great activity in road-making in this district. "We have," wrote Edmund Evans, of Bonsall, to a correspondent, "lately been very busy in making a coach or wagon road from Bonsall to Crumford, from which place there is one already made to Mat Bath (wh was done at Mr. Pennell's expense, who built the Bath) & another from Crumford to Swanwick made mostly at Mr. Turnor's expense for the encouragement of his cole trade. So when ours is compleated it will make a through passage from Matlock Bath to Buxton & likewise neigh to the colepitts, to Nottingham or Derby, or where

else they have occasion that way. This rough piece of work is not done by any levey, but chiefly by the Miners, who have no wage, but all come to assist. . . . The gunpowder they blow away & the ale we allowed 'em is paid out of a collection some of us have made amongst ourselves, only Mrs. Hallam (who keeps the Bath) hath sent a guinea & Mr. Moore, of Wimper, ten shillings."[1]

A Road-Maker's Memorial.

Some of the roads thus made still bear the names of those who brought them into existence. The Via Gellia (popularly, the "Via Jelly"), near Matlock, was so called after one of the Gells, of Hopton, at whose expense it was cut through the rocks; and there are many similar instances of road nomenclature, though in numerous cases names indicative of the origin of particular highways have dropped out of use. One of these is curious as illustrating the slovenly manner in which turnpike Acts were drafted. When, in the reign of George I., an Act was obtained for amending the road from Cambridge to Foulmire, it was stated to be in the county of Cambridge, and in a later Act of the same

[1] J. C. Cox, "Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals," ii. 231.

character the road from Ware to Barleybottom was described as in Herts., the promoters having, by a strange lapse, failed to notice that a portion of the road—that between the 11th milestone and the 13th—runs through Essex. Owing to this omission, the Essex part of the road, being excluded from the benefits of the Acts, remained in a ruinous state till Samuel Henry Pont, the then Recorder of Cambridge, with the assistance of the colleges, brought it into line with the rest of the way. From this circumstance the road was long known as the "Recorder's Road."

In general, however, the blessings we enjoy through the efforts of our ancestors to improve the roads accrue from bequests which either made or are still applied to the upkeep of highways in use to this day. Of such a gift we are reminded by a pillar on a fine stretch of road between Attleborough and Wymondham, part of the earliest turnpike in Norfolk. It records the charity of Sir Edwin Rich, a distinguished lawyer, who was born at Thetford. On a mural monument to him in the church at Mulbarton there are some lines composed by himself—for he was, as he says, his "own Death's poet"—the last containing a play on his name:

Here lies Sir Edwin Rich, who lov'd the poor.

The truth in the conceit atones for its feebleness. Sir Edwin, on his death in 1675, gave £100

to build a bridge and also, as the wayside stone recites, £200 towards the repair of the road between Wymondham and Attleborough, which was in his time a mere track. Since it was known as the Portway, it was probably in existence in ancient times; but apparently it did not form part of the route between Norwich and Thetford when Rich travelled to and from his birthplace, a series of bogs stretching across it from Larlingford to Wymondham.[1] It was turnpiked by an Act of 7 and 8 William III. (1695-6).

In Harrow Church there is a record of a still more generous gift of this kind. It is on the tomb of John Lyon, the founder of the famous school on the hill, who, it is said, "for releyffe of the poore and of some poore schollars in the Universityes, repairinge of highwayes, and other good and charitable uses, hath made Conveyance of lands of good value to a Corporation granted for that purpose." Lyon did, in fact, some years before his death in 1592, enter into certain agreements whereby, on the decease of himself and his wife, the income from specified lands went "toward and upon the repairing and amending of the highway from the town of Edgware, in Middlesex, unto the City of London," of the "highway from the town of Harrow-

[1] Ogilby, however, marks it, and in the turnpiking Act it is described as "part of the ancient high way and post road from London to Norwich." This seems conclusive; but earlier map-makers ignore it, and many travellers, among them Will Kemp, a low comedian who danced from Norwich to London, certainly went *via* Rockland, Hingham, and Barford Bridge.

on-the-Hill unto the City of London, called Harrow waye, by Harlston and Paddington," and of other roads in the neighbourhood.

Less than a century after Lyon's death there was litigation as to the apportionment of the revenue from the property to the repair of these roads. In 1655 Leonard Stockdale, of Kingsbury, presented a petition, praying that the governors of Harrow School might be called to account as to their administration; and ultimately a decree was made against the governors, ordering them to repair the highways between Edgware and London and Harrow-on-the-Hill and London from time to time as need should require, according to the true intent and meaning of Lyon's will, and to appoint two overseers to look after the same. Otherwise the testator's directions appear to have been carried out, on the whole, with exemplary care.

That they have been of great and increasing benefit to ratepayers, as such, is certain; for the lands charged with the minor object of maintaining roads have outstripped in value those set apart for the chief purpose. From time to time parts of the Lyon estate have been sold for railway and public improvements, and are now represented by Consols. In 1909, too, leases began to fall in, with the result that the trust has again profited largely, the rental in one case having been increased from £128 to £680.

More and more money has, therefore, been available for the maintenance of the highways to which Lyon extended his beneficence. By about 1850 the receipts from the governors of Harrow School on behalf of such roads had grown to £3,000 per annum, and since then they have much increased.

Towards the upkeep of the Edgware Road a contemporary of the yeoman who founded Harrow School also left a bequest in which the ratepayers are still practically interested. John Harvist, a brewer, who often travelled between Tyburn and Edgware (where he lived), by his will left certain lands at Holloway in trust to the "Master, Wardens, and Cominaltie of the Arte Mysterye of Brewers of the Citie of London," the "rentes, yssues, revenues, and profittes therefrom" to be applied, less 40s., which was to go to the Master and Wardens, "to and uppon the repayringe and amending of the high waye between Tyborn and Edgeworthe, in the County of Middlesex, from time to time yerelie for ever." Part of the Harvist lands was taken by the Great Northern Railway Company for the purpose of their undertaking, and the compensation (£4,149 14s. 9d.) invested in Consols; and of the rest the Commissioners of Turnpike Roads in the Metropolis were, by an Act passed in 1855, authorised to grant leases. The annual revenue from the estate, which, as Harvist "willed and

required," has been improved "to the best valewe yerlie," now amounts to £876, and this sum, except the 40s. set apart for the Brewers' Company, is applied towards the maintenance of the Edgware Road.

Other roads in London benefit by a bequest of William Heron, who in 1580 gave £8 annually, charged upon property left to the Clothworkers' Company, towards repairing the "high causeways" in most needful places between the Spital House, at Highgate, and the corner house of St. James's Wall, as well as the "common high causeway" leading from Highgate through Kentish Town to Battlebridge. The rental of the property, as in the other cases, has much improved since the testator's death.

A further ancient benefaction of this kind is utilised, or should be utilised, in keeping in repair that part of the Hastings Road which extends from River Hill to Northiam Church. Its history is curious. Along this highway, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, plodded strings of packhorses in the service of one James Wilford, a rippier, of Rye. Outward they carried fish in panniers to London; inward, parcels and general merchandise. Wilford, by his will of 1514, claimed to have made the stretch of road from River Hill to Northiam Church, and proceeded to show his paternal interest in it by leaving for its perpetual repair an annuity of £7, chargeable

upon property belonging to the Merchant Taylors' Company, and payable upon notice that such road was in need of amendment. With what must have seemed at the time as great excess of caution, he directed that the money should be paid to the executors and relatives bearing the name of Wilford, and after their death to the vicar and churchwardens of Rye, then, should those gentlemen neglect their duty, to the vicar and churchwardens of Northiam, and then, in the event of any dereliction of duty on their part, to Newenden. But the testator, for all his care, did not make sufficient provision for contingencies. Rye, Northiam, and Newenden in turn omitted to carry out Wilford's directions, and eventually the money was allowed to accumulate in the hands of the Merchant Taylors' Company for twenty years. As it was then a sum worth claiming, Rye, Northiam, and Newenden jointly petitioned the company to pay it to Rye. This was done, whereupon Rye handed the fund to the trustees of the turnpike road from Flimwell to that town, and so presumably deprived the greater part of the highway that Wilford claimed to have made of any benefit from his annuity. The money, however, is now paid to the Kent County Council.

Similar bequests are still applied to the upkeep of many other roads, and their history, when it is known, well-nigh invariably shows that their

precise intent was suggested by unpleasant experiences. Custom impelled a man to bequeath money towards the maintenance of the highways, and the particular highways he chose for the benefits of his charity were, as a rule, those which he knew best and on which he had suffered most.

The same principle operated in connection with bequests which, though not for the upkeep of the roads, were yet intended to help the traveller. When much of England was unenclosed, a man journeying from one town to another, whether on horse or on foot, frequently lost his way, and was ultimately guided to a haven by the tolling of the curfew from the tower of some church. Mindful in after years of his own preservation by the ringing of a bell, he left money to assure similar help to other belated wayfarers. John Carey, some time Mayor of Woodstock, bequeathed 10s. per annum to that town, with directions that a bell should be rung at eight o'clock each night during the winter for the guidance of travellers. A plot, known as "Bell Ringing Close," in South Luffenham, Rutland, preserves the memory of a similar gift, which was made by a lady whom the curfew was instrumental in saving from a night's wandering; and a piece of land—the "Ding-Dong Piece"—at West Rasen, Lincolnshire, was left in similar circumstances. A variant of this method of befriending the traveller occurred on

the Birmingham-Alcester road. In the early part of the nineteenth century a stranger lost his way at Holly Wood, and for a long time (two days and nights, tradition relates) wandered over the wild common land seeking in vain for guidance. In the end, when nearly exhausted, he encountered a native, who put him on his way. Grateful for his preservation, he erected by the side of the highway a lofty maypole, with arms directing the traveller to Birmingham, Alcester, Solihull, and King's Norton, and this provision remained for nearly one hundred years. Though it was blown down several times, there was a pole on the spot till long after the Warwickshire County Council was constituted.

This spirit was not displayed by later philanthropists who improved the King's highway. In many cases, indeed, the traveller, though benefited, was hardly taken into consideration at all. Thus, for instance, an important work on a main road was carried out principally in the interests of horses. In 1863 a wagon laden with a boiler was descending a hill at Broughton, near Preston, when it got beyond control, over-ran the horses, and ultimately, when near a bend, pitched on its side, killing one of the men in charge and three of the horses. The occurrence so greatly affected two ladies who then lived in the neighbourhood, the Misses Cross, that they had the hill lowered, at a cost of about £800, and thus

Maud Heath's Causeway.

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conferred a great boon on the whole district. A tablet let into the wall records the event. It is inscribed :

To relieve the sufferings
Of the animals labouring in our service,
The steep ascent of this hill
Was lowered
At the expense of Mary and Margaret Cross,
Of Myerscough,
A.D. 1869.

This deed of mercy appeals to every
Passer-by, that he, too, show mercy to
The creatures God has put under his hands.

Taxation doubtless killed philanthropy in so far as the traveller was concerned. Compelled to pay heavily while alive towards the roads, people naturally objected to contribute to their maintenance after they were dead ; and thus we find that as the cost of highways increased so the stream of charity towards them diminished, and at last ceased altogether.

CHAPTER IV.

Early Transport: Pack and Pillion.

The great criteria of the state of the roads during the Middle Ages and thence onward to the early part of the nineteenth century are the contemporary modes of transport. By them may be judged not only the King's highway as a whole, but the rate of improvement in construction and administration; and the conclusion drawn must be that progress was so slow as frequently to be imperceptible to one generation.

In the Middle Ages personal conveyance was mostly in litter, pillion, or saddle. People of all degrees travelled on horseback, husband and wife, mistress and servant, commonly riding on one steed, as Petruchio and Catherine made their wedding journey. Since Queen Catherine of Arragon, when crowned in 1559, was borne in a litter followed by chariots covered, with "the ladies therein,"[1] the horse-litter was presumably the mediæval equivalent of the modern state coach.

As the highways improved wheeled vehicles were brought into use, at first in towns and their environs, and afterwards on trunk roads. In London carriages were not unknown in the fourteenth century. Richard II., accompanied

[1] "Holinshed's "Chronicles" (1586), iii. 801.

by his mother, rode from the Tower to Mile End in a wirlicothe during the insurrection of 1381; "for," adds Stow,[1] who records the event, "the world runs on wheeles with many whose parents were glad to goe on foot." About 1564 the first public road vehicle, the huge, lumbering stage wagon, was introduced, and a little later private coaches began to roll along the highways. Though Queen Elizabeth made most of her journeys on horseback, she was, in her progress to Warwick in 1572, borne in a coach, "every part and side" of which was opened, "that all her subjects present might behold her, which most gladly they desired."[2] Two-wheel carts, also, conveyed her baggage, though, as these vehicles numbered six hundred, and six horses were required in each, the roads must have been ill-suited for vehicular traffic.

Pannier Riding. After Bunbury's "Me and My Wife and Daughter."

By 1580 coaches had, notwithstanding the state of the roads, become so much in favour among the wealthy that there was a loud outcry against them on the ground that they would inevitably lead to degeneracy in men and the neglect of horsemanship; and hardly had the storm subsided before

[1] "Survey" (1908), i. 84. [2] J. Nichols, "Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth" (1823), i. 311.

it burst again because stage coaches had been put on the road. Seeing that Chamberlayne wrote of them in 1649 as a novelty, they appear to have been introduced about 1640. "There is of late," he says, "such an admirable commodiousness, both for men and women of better rank, to travel from London to almost any great town of England and to almost all the villages near this great city, that the like hath not been known in the world, and that is by stage coaches, wherein one may be transported to any place sheltered from foul weather and foul ways, free from endamaging one's health or body by hard jogging or over-violent motion, and this not only at a low price, as about a shilling for every five miles, but with velocity and speed as that the posts in some foreign countries make not more miles in a day."[1]

Stage coaches were attacked by one John Cressett,[2] who, after describing their introduction as "one of the greatest mischiefs that have happened of late years to the King," declared that they wrought harm—

1. By destroying the breed of good horses, the strength of the nation; and making men careless of attaining to good horsemanship, a thing so useful and commendable in a gentleman.

2. By hindering the breed of watermen, who are the nursery for seamen, and they the bulwarks of the kingdom.

[1] "Present State of England" (1671), part ii., pp. 229-30.
[2] "The Grand Concern of England Explained," Har. Mis., viii. 561.

3. By lessening of his majesty's revenues . . . for there is not the fourth part of saddle horses either bred or kept now in England that [there] was before these coaches set up, and would be again if suppressed.

On these grounds Cressett urged that stage coaches should be abolished, and that men should be made to ride on horseback or travel in the long wagons, which, he said, moved "easily without jolting men's bodies or hurrying them along as the running coaches do"; or, if Parliament would not take such measures, that changing horses should be prohibited on coach journeys. This would have extended the run to York or Exeter to about a fortnight. At this time the "flying coaches" covered about fifty miles a day, making the journey to Chester, Exeter, or York in four days, and requiring forty horses for each complete journey. If, therefore, Cressett's proposal had been adopted, it would have taken a fortnight or longer to get from London to any one of the three cities, and the fare would have had to be increased from £2 in summer and £2 5s. in winter[1] to prohibitive sums, while it might not have done something, as Cressett contended it would, "to support the innkeeping business."

But so slowly did stage coaches gain ground that the old means of personal conveyance did

[1] Fares by stage coach at the Restoration averaged from 2½d. to 3d. per mile, and in the reign of George IV. they were 3d. or 4d. for the same distance. Posting (on horseback) cost from 1d. per mile in the time of Philip and Mary and 3d. during the Commonwealth to 9d. (in a chaise) in the middle of the eighteenth century and 1s. 6d. in the days of George IV.

not become obsolete till a much later period. In 1753 not a single coach left Liverpool for "Manchester, London, or any other places";[1] and,

A roadside mounting stone.

The Packhorse Bridge at Moulton, near Newmarket.

though a "flying stage coach" was running between London and Warrington in 1756, passengers for places further north than Warrington

[1] T. Baines, "History of Liverpool," 418.

had to proceed on horseback.[1] There was till 1760 a similar lack of coach connection with parts of Cornwall. West and south-west of Penzance the roads were merely bridle tracks, the turnpike extending no further than Falmouth.

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, indeed, there were whole districts in which a coach or carriage was a veritable marvel. Immeasurable was the amazement Sydney Smith created in 1808 on arriving at Foston-le-Clay, Yorkshire, in a four-wheeled carriage, many of his parishioners never having seen such a thing; and a few years later the parish clerk, the sexton, and the churchwardens burst into the church in breathless excitement to tell the witty divine that a coach was rapidly approaching the village.

Coaches did not monopolise personal conveyance between towns even when they had become established on the roads which linked together those towns. Travellers commonly rode on horseback, and for security proceeded together, forming a sort of caravan; and on arriving in London they deposited their pads or packs with their banker. Though the London and Oxford service started in 1669, and was, about the middle of the eighteenth century, one of the best in the kingdom, "four saddle horses and a guide" set out for "Gloucester or Oxford" from the Black Bear Inn, Piccadilly, in 1745.[2] In this case, as

[1] C. Hardwick, "History of Preston," 382.

[2] *Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 9th, 1745.

in many others, the advantage of speed lay with the older mode of conveyance, because the coach took two days to "fly" from London to Oxford, whereas a horseman could leave Piccadilly in the morning and reach Carfax before sunset. For this reason travelling on horseback continued for many years later, and was not uncommon till the golden age of coaching.

As evidence of this bygone mode of personal conveyance from town to town we still have many of the upping blocks and stages which were provided to help riders to mount or dismount from saddle or pillion. Numbers of these conveniences have disappeared, among them a curious block which stood at the foot of the hill leading down from Putney Heath to Kingston. On it was inscribed the name of Thomas Nuthall, surveyor of Roehampton, 1654, and the lines:

> From London towne to Portse downe,
> They say, 'tis miles three score.

Gone, too, is a curious old mounting block of wood which formerly stood near Middle Row, Knightsbridge, and which was remarkable for being encrusted with bad money accepted, or, at least, stopped, at the neighbouring public-house.

Numbers of similar relics, however, remain on the King's highway. The milestones across Dunsmore, Warwickshire (on the Holyhead Road), are shaped like mounting blocks, and there is a stone of the same kind near the old

road over Shotover Hill to Oxford. Of upping stones proper there are examples at Bayard's Leap, on Ermine Street; at Chew Magna, on the direct Bristol-Wells road; and at Aston-le-Walls, between Banbury and Byfield. Cut on the stone at Bayard's Leap is the name of the parish, and the block at Aston-le-Walls is inscribed: "Thomas Hight, of Warden, set up this Jvly the 30, 1659." At or near churchyard gates also stand a number of such survivals from the

Mounting Block at Adel, near Leeds; *Mounting Stage at Wingfield Church, Suffolk.*

pack and pillion era. A good upping stone flanks the entrance to the churchyard at Adel, near Leeds, and let into the churchyard wall at Wingfield, Suffolk, is a mounting stage, which is approached on one side by three steps.

While the stage coach was displacing the saddle horse, its progenitor, the stage wagon, slowly gained ground as an improved means of transporting goods and merchandise. Before the

advent of that vehicle nearly everything had been conveyed from place to place on horses' backs. Fuel, whether turf from the moor or sea-borne coal landed at some part of the coast, had been thus carried to houses and forges; not a few of the bridges and the stately homes of England had been transported piecemeal to their sites by the same slow and cumbrous means; and packhorses had been as indispensable to trade as railways are now. But after the stage wagon was put on the roads other wheeled vehicles, which had previously been used mainly by farmers, were of less restricted service, though for long subsequently the highways in general were impassable for them, particularly in the winter months.

Farmers could not always utilise their wains and wagons even in the middle of the seventeenth century, but were obliged in the autumn and winter to carry manure to the fields in panniers, and send their butter, corn, and wool to market on horses' backs. At Helmsley, Yorkshire, it was the practice to range six horses in a line, tie them head to tail, and then load; and two of such lines, with two drivers, conveyed altogether nine quarters of oats to Beverley.[1]

Though, too, some carriers transported goods by wagon, many of them continued to use packhorses. Roderick Random, in travelling from

[1] "Rural Economy in Yorkshire in 1641" (Surtees Society, xxxiii.)

Glasgow to London in 1739, found "no such convenience as a wagon" in the northern counties, and "set out with the carriers who transport goods from one place to another on horseback," arriving at Newcastle "sitting upon a pack-saddle between two baskets." As a fact, the London wagons did not go higher up the country than Wigan or Standish, where they loaded with coal for the return journey. Transport between Wigan and Carlisle and the Border was almost wholly left to packhorses, the principal station for which was Kendal. A little further south at the same period wagons were not numerous. Pickford, the founder of Messrs. Pickford, Ltd., in the first half of the seventeenth century began to convey parcels from Manchester, and for more than one hundred years the business was carried on by pack trains, which regularly traversed Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Staffordshire. The first rival of the Manchester house also owned pack trains. He was Bass, of Stafford, who about 1720 combined brewing with carrying, and sold his ale to the people to whom he delivered parcels. Ultimately, seeing more profit in the one trade than in the other, he disposed of the plant and goodwill of his carrying business to "Pickfords," and founded the great Bass brewery at Burton.

Merchandise also was transported in panniers and pack-saddles long after wagons had become common. Cavalcades of horses, thirty or forty

in number, conveyed coal, lime, salt, and other minerals across country, and smaller trains were the chief distributing agencies of the textile industries. In Leeds, Halifax, Bradford, Huddersfield, and other towns traders kept gangs of packhorses, which set out with them in spring for the fairs and market towns, and a single train of which frequently carried £1,000 worth of cloth. When all the bales were sold, the horses loaded back with wool, and then again started with a further supply of goods, which they carried to the places where the salesmen awaited their arrival.[1] The same system was practised in the Manchester trade, teams transporting bales of prints and calicoes to wholesale dealers all over the country and returning with raw materials. There was, therefore, much traffic between Lancashire and Yorkshire and many parts of the country. From these counties to Stourbridge Fair alone went nearly one thousand horsepacks of cotton and woollen goods, which took up a side and a half of the Duddery, the square formed of the largest booths.[2]

The tables of the wealthy were, moreover, largely replenished by packhorses, which, slow though they were, transported perishable delicacies with a speed impossible to wagons. Trout and salmon were despatched to the metropolis even from Workington and Carlisle, and, as frequent

[1] Defoe's "Tour," iii. 121. [2] Ibid., i. 94.

changes of horses were made, and the journey was continued day and night, without intermission, the drivers "out-going the post," the fish arrived "very sweet and good" in London, where it fetched from 2s. 6d. to 4s. per pound. This "extraordinary price" paid "very well for the carriage."[1]

By about the middle of the eighteenth century the old method of transport had reached its zenith. Long caravans broke up and animated every extensive prospect in rural districts, and as they passed, winding sinuously through valleys and over hills inaccessible to wheeled vehicles, the air was musical with the faint tinklings of the bells that their leaders carried to give warning of their approach. Along the main channels of communication trains plodded day and night, stopping nowhere except at the recognised halting places, where their coming and going attracted shoals of idlers. The yard of the "Tabard," in Southwark, was thronged with horses and drivers more accustomed to the soft and gravelly roads of the southern counties than the stones of London. At Turnham Green the "Old Packhorse" was nearly as well patronised by carriers, and its neighbour, the "Packhorse and Talbot," the sign of which still preserves the memory of the primitive traffic, as well as of the packmen's

[1] Defoe's "Tour," iii. 268. The cost of normal transport became lower as roads improved. Under Charles II. it was (by wagon) from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 6d. per ton per mile, whereas in the reign of George IV. minerals were carried for 5d. per mile and general commodities for 7d. or 8d.

favourite dog, was also much used by the carriers who travelled along the Western Road. Further afield there were many houses which, like the "Packhorse," at Chippenham, their name, drew the bulk of their income, as they derived from the principal method of transport. The packhorse was ubiquitous and indispensable.

All this was changed by the opening of canals and the improvement of main roads. The new waterways robbed the pack trains of much traffic, and then the wagons gradually invaded their territory more and more. Great obstacles to those "machines," as their owners called them, and to all other vehicles were the old horse bridges; but one by one these were widened on the main lines of communication, and ultimately so many were thus adapted to wheeled traffic that few have come down to us in their original form, though the structures are not yet extinct. Weather-worn, narrow, high-pitched, they are now, as a rule, more picturesque than useful. They generally indicate their primary intent by their low parapets, and not infrequently by their V-shaped recesses also. The parapets were made low to allow the packs to swing clear, while the recesses were for sheltering pedestrians, as well as for the drivers to stand in, that their jaded horses might not come to a stop on the crown and be difficult to start again. In many cases,

too, a deep channel in the middle of the footway, which often consists merely of the keystones of the arch, tells the plainest of plain tales.

Of the packhorse bridges on metalled roads there is a good specimen over the Browney, at Aldin Grange, near Durham. Underneath it, according to tradition, David Bruce was captured after the battle of Neville's Cross. Finding that the fortune of war was turning against the Scots, the King, it is said, fled from the field, and hid under the bridge, only, however, soon to be discovered by some English soldiers, who saw his shadow on the water as they were crossing the bridge hot on his track. The structure is now little more than a relic, a modern bridge alongside it carrying nearly all the traffic.

A similar bridge at Sutton, Beds., is kept in repair by the Marston charity, founded in the seventeenth century by John Burgoyne and Constance, Lady Burgoyne. Of the annual income of £21, which is derived from land, one-third is applied to the maintenance of the church and bridge.

At Charwelton, Northamptonshire, stands an ancient two-arched structure of the same type, the first bridge over the river Cher, the source of which is a spring in the cellar of a house about a mile distant. By the side of the bridge was the usual splash; but this has long been covered over.

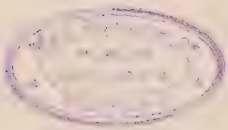
Another interesting bridge remains at Moulton, near Newmarket. Unlike most relics of its class, it is built of flint, and it is further peculiar in that it spans a channel which, though deep, is now generally dry, and contains little water even after prolonged rain.

Of a still more unusual type is a packhorse bridge at Hampton-in-Arden, Warwickshire. Supported on five arches with four cutwaters, it is no less than 77ft. in length and only 6ft. 8in. wide, with a parapet 6in. high. It appears to date from the thirteenth century.

But packhorse bridges, though rare on metalled roads, are not uncommon in the valleys of Lancashire and Yorkshire, where they have been suffered to remain because the exigencies of traffic have never called for their alteration or removal. As no turnpike road passed over them, they were not widened in the eighteenth century, and modern needs have not necessitated such an operation. They have been left alone, in fact, because they are mostly far off the beaten track.

It is mainly in these districts, too, that packhorse roads can still be followed for miles. On low-lying lands they are frequently paved, and the rough slabs of the pavement are now, as a result of the traffic which has passed over them, worn away in the middle to a depth of 2in. or 3in., though during the cotton famine many of those in Lancashire were repaved to find work

Sutton (Beds). ***Packhorse Bridge.***



for the unemployed. Such roads were absolutely necessary in many places, because in winter the land was, owing to lack of drainage, a veritable slough, and impassable even for horses. When two trains travelling in opposite directions met at a point where one would have to descend into the morass to let the other pass, the drivers commonly decided by a bout of fisticuffs which should give way. They preferred to run the risk of a hiding rather than voluntarily go to the trouble of urging tired and heavily-burdened horses through soft, waterlogged land into which their feet would sink at every stride. Encounters between guards were frequent in the latter part of the eighteenth century even on the causeway between Preston and Wigan, which, though part of Watling Street, scarcely afforded room for two gangs of packhorses abreast. If fights for the way were not uncommon on so comparatively good a road, they must have been looked upon as part of the day's work by those drivers whose journeys were along twisting paths which were very much worse

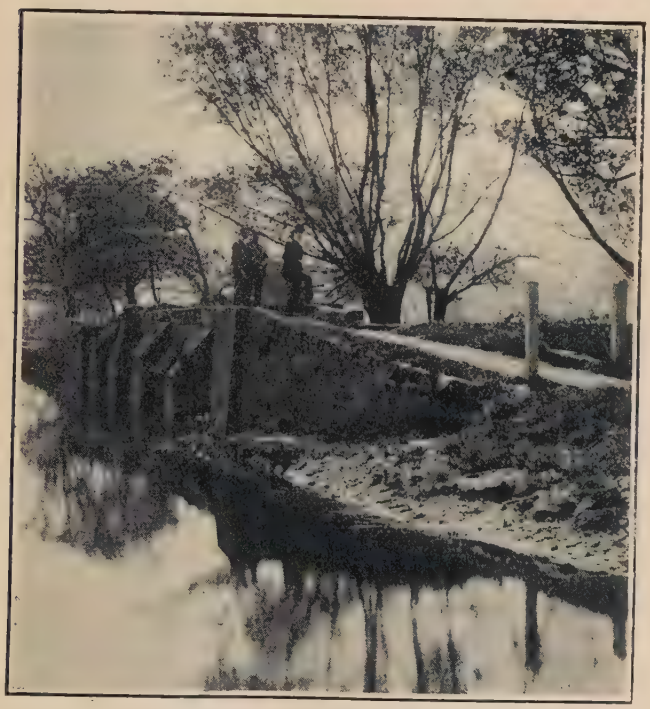
Attempts have been made of late years to close many of these old roads and so deprive the public of access to the scenes of countless traditions—traditions of heroic fights between drivers, of sanguinary conflicts with highwaymen, of the wild, semi-savage life which flowed along these minor ways, of events which the historian has

considered not unworthy of his notice. Most numerous, perhaps, are the legends of highwaymen, many of whom did, in fact, rob trains habitually, though not with that dash and daring popularly credited to them. A common practice was for several of the freebooters to lay in wait at night for a convoy. As it passed the spot where they were concealed, they seized the bridle of the horse bearing the most valuable packs, led it aside, and, after gagging it, lest its whinny draw answering cries from its disappearing companions, plundered the saddles. They then conveyed the goods to a neighbouring inn, at which they had previously learned which horse would be the best to stop. In general, however, the rights of the public to use packhorse roads have been preserved. One of the finest of the old ways, which runs right across the backbone of England, extending as it does from Blakeleys to Rochdale, has been kept open by the Marsden Urban District Council, which has cut away the turf which had encroached on it and placed along it stone pillars.

While, however, packhorses were, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, deprived of their pride of place by canals and wagons, they continued for decades later, though in rapidly diminishing numbers, to plod along the roads, metalled and other. Wagons, indeed, never succeeded in wholly displacing them, because

they themselves were, before their victory was quite complete, vanquished by railways.

It would be as difficult to assign a date to the end as to the beginning of the pack and pillion



A Warwickshire Packhorse Bridge.

era. Packhorses held their ground in remote parts of Devonshire till about 1850, and for twenty years later many ladies in rural parts of the country rode pillion to church or market. The

ood wives of Southorpe, Lincolnshire, did not cease before about 1850 to journey in this manner to Kirton-in-Lindsey for the purpose of replenishing their larders. Up to 1875, too, the spectacle of a man and his wife ambling along on one steed was, in some parts of the country, particularly in Wales, too common to excite remark, even when it was obvious that the couple were going to a funeral. More remarkable still is it that panniers, which the eighteenth century carriers often filled with human freight, were occasionally used for personal conveyance till recent times, though, of course, not with so grotesque an effect as in Bunbury's caricature, "Me and My Wife and Daughter." Probably the passing of the old order of things was so gradual and uneventful that nobody noted its actual accomplishment; for in this country revolutions in modes of transit have generally been long drawn out.

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CHAPTER V.

The Ways: Pilgrims' and Others.

With the making in mediæval times of relatively direct and wide lines of communication between towns for general use went on the striking out of byways to meet local or special needs. It was then, in the main, that the countryside was scored as we now see. Some of our lanes and tracks were old even in the Middle Ages, others were then roads thronged with traffic, and numbers are of comparatively recent origin; but they mostly date from the Saxon and Norman periods.

These tributaries of the King's highway vein every shire, and plainly show by their course, which is as sinuous over wind-swept hills as through dense woodlands, that no engineer ever laid them out. Communication did more than call for them; it actually, as their name sometimes indicates, made them.

Many of such roads, the exploration of which yields endless surprises, were important channels of trade, and were called after the principal traffic that they bore. There are several salt ways, one of which starts from Droitwich, climbs the Cotswolds at Hayles, and passes through Hawling, Salperton, and Coln St. Aldwyns to

the Thames at Lechlade. Ultimately it runs near the Welsh Way, along which coal and cattle were brought from Wales. Hog ways, used for the traffic in pigs from the Weald, are numerous in some parts of Kent; and about Romney Marsh, in the same county, several keg ways bear witness to the hold that the smuggling industry had on the local community. To the same class of roads belong bullock ways, drove ways, sheep ways, sand ways, rush ways, lead ways, iron ways, and tin ways. All these were commercial roads at a time when transport was slow and tedious, and over them passed strings of jingling pack-horses, as well, in some cases, as droves of animals on their way to slaughter.

None of the cattle-trodden tracks has more stirring annals than the Drove Road, which strikes from the Northumberland part of Watling Street, crosses the Border, and thence runs to Falkirk, and the tributaries of which can be traced through every shire in the Lowlands. Its history is comparatively short, dating back as it does only to the time when the Falkirk tryst was the principal market in Scotland. Ordinary roads being then bad and dotted with tollbar houses, drovers, buyers, and dealers made a way of their own, following a bee-line, and showing a Roman-like contempt for hills that the modern wayfarer admires in the abstract only; and, notwithstanding that their route soon became infested by

gangs of rogues, who plundered dealers of their money and drovers of their stock, it was for years subsequently the principal road to the great market at Falkirk.

Though the Drove Road is now seldom used, and in some places is cut through by modern highways and in others blocked by villages of a later generation, there is no difficulty in following it for many miles continuously, now plunging into thickets, and then striking straight for a hill, on which, seen from afar, it is a brown ribbon in bold contrast to its green environment. It is, too, a very lonely road; but anybody who passes along it cannot fail to pick up many traditions of the bloody deeds of which it has been the scene.

Most of the old byways, however, are, or were, connected with the church. In remote, sparsely-populated districts, such as Dartmoor and the Lake District, there are many lyke, lych, or corpse ways, which were formed at a time when churches were few, and such an incident as that recorded by the Rev. Robert Walker (Wordsworth's "Wonderful Walker") was possible. While the inhabitants of Seathwaite were conveying a body to Kirkby for interment, snow began to fall, and by the time they had reached a part of the hill above Newfield the ground was so thickly covered that they could not go any further. They consequently placed the coffin on

the common, and there it remained for a few days.

In Westmorland there are several corpse roads. One runs from Mardale to Shap, and the course of a similar way at Coniston is indicated by "Jenken-sike" (literally, Jenken's brook), which preserves the memory of an accident to a funeral party. Before 1586, when Coniston Church was consecrated, the people of the district buried their dead at Ulverston, whither corpses were conveyed on sledges. The body of a man belonging to Tiberthwaite was being transported to Ulverston, when it slipped off the sledge and fell into the brook. For some time it was not missed; but ultimately the funeral party saw that it had gone, returned, and fished it out of the stream, which has consequently been known ever since as "Jenken-sike."

The extreme tortuousness, and in some cases the origin, of lych roads can be traced to an old fallacy. It was a common belief that when a corpse was carried over land a right of way was thereby established, and for no other reason farmers in South Lincolnshire and other parts of the country still refuse to allow a dead body to pass over their fields. This unjustifiable fear gave rise to the custom of paying a peppercorn toll for a right of passage. The undertaker usually stuck a number of pins in each gate as the funeral procession went through it, and these were accepted by the owner of the land as an

A pilgrims' Halting Place: The Church and Archbishops' Palace, Charing.

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acknowledgment that the right of way was granted only for this particular occasion. An instance of paying pins for a passage over land was recorded as late as 1878. During a flood at Havant, Hants, an undertaker asked a village farmer to allow, in order that the water might be avoided, a corpse to be carried to the churchyard across his fields. On the farmer hesitating, the undertaker offered to stick six black pins in the gatepost of the meadow through which the *cortège* would pass, and, no further scruple being raised, the funeral party crossed the land, and as it did so the undertaker duly carried out his promise.[1] But the toll, though generally in pins, seems sometimes to have been in current coin. There is a tradition at Leatherhead that one penny was charged for permission to carry a corpse through the Swan Brewery Yard. Not infrequently, therefore, dead bodies had to be conveyed by unnecessarily circuitous routes to their last resting places.

Allied to lych ways are church roads, the name of which indicates their primary intent. In 1904 there was an interesting dispute at Greystoke, near Penrith, as to the responsibility for the upkeep of such a road. Both the parish council and the district council repudiated liability, and the question of ownership was in consequence referred to the Cumberland County Council. Evidence given on behalf of the parish council

[1] *Notes and Queries*, 5th S. x. 49.

showed that forty years previously, when foot-and-mouth disease was prevalent, farmers were prohibited from moving cattle from one field to another, because they would have to take them over the path, which was, therefore (it was argued), then a public road. For the other side it was contended that the path was a church way, and a witness proved that in 1833 a search was made along it for a sanctuary stone, and that such a stone was found. In the end, a compromise was arrived at, the parish council and the district council agreeing to be jointly responsible for the repair of the road.

Several church ways in Lincolnshire are curious by reason of the form of most or all of the stones with which they are paved. It is a long oval, or, roughly, that of a coffin, and has been likened to the "celt"-shaped monoliths of Stonehenge.[1] A causeway of this kind extends from the high road to the church at Saltfleet by All Saints, and another runs from Saltfleet to Skidbrooke.

A more obscure class of ways connected with the church are still fragmentarily represented in some parts of the country. These are monks' roads and clergy tracks. Between Buckfast and Tavistock, on Dartmoor, there is a track called the "Abbot's Way"; near Ely and Peterborough remain portions of stone causeways which were

[1] *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries*, iii. 57.

traditionally constructed for the clergy; and many similar roads, all of which are reputed to be haunted, lead to ruined abbeys.

But most interesting of all old ways, whether commercial or ecclesiastical, are those over which pilgrims travelled to shrines famous throughout Christendom. For these tracks, if rough, are clearly defined, except where they have been enclosed or buried under metalled high roads, and are exceptionally rich in historical associations. They run, moreover, aloof from the lines of modern traffic, which never rouses them from their somnolence, and through some of the fairest parts of England.

The most ancient of these tracks is the pilgrims' way from Winchester to Canterbury. If not, as some have contended,[1] the oldest road in England, it was certainly in existence during the Roman era, and probably it was part of the route along which in earlier times tin was transported in wagons from Cornwall to Thanet. From Winchester westward an ancient track can be traced as far as Launceston. Near Stourton, in Somerset, where it is particularly plain, it is known as the "Hard Way," and a pond near it bears the name of "Hard Way Water." But the distinction of the Winchester-Canterbury way is due to the passage along it of pilgrims from Normandy and Brittany, as well as those from

[1] *e.g.*, H. Belloc, "The Old Road."

the West of England, to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket, the greatest "hallow" in Europe for four centuries.

For the most part, the old way still survives, and where it has been enclosed, merged into a town or village, or otherwise obliterated, the course it took is seldom doubtful. Traditions, place-names, and, above all, the characteristics of pilgrims' roads in general, enable nearly all the gaps to be bridged with ease. The folk-lore of the "Old Pilgrim" includes a belief that the road can be traced by the edible variety of white snails (*helix pomatra*), which are said to have been introduced into Kent and Surrey by Norman-French pilgrims. This particular kind of mollusc is very plentiful at Albury, Charing, and other places on the way; but it is no less common in parts of the country through which pilgrims from the other side of the Channel never passed regularly. In place-names the word "street" is the most significant indication of the course of the road; and of the features of pilgrim ways two are of equal importance to the explorer. The first is that such ways always avoid the clay where possible, and the second that they everywhere make for high ground, quickly rising to it again after passing a ford. It is possible, therefore, to tread much of the way that the mediæval pilgrims covered in their journey from Winchester to Canterbury.

Holy Well, Lansdown.
Chapel Plaster, near Box.

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The old road mostly winds along the hillsides, where its course can be seen from afar by a string of yews trailing across the North Downs. Here and there, as at Guildford and Compton, it passes close to the remains of one of those chapels which were erected for wayfarers, and at other parts of the route it makes tolerably straight for a known halting place. Such a spot is Charing, which the travellers reached in good time, that they might see the Palace of the Archbishops of Canterbury, as well as the church, which was celebrated far and wide on account of its containing the block used at the beheading of John the Baptist. At last, after twisting and winding for about 120 miles, the way reaches Harbledown, where it runs into the road (Watling Street) along which Chaucer's pilgrims came, and where travellers from both directions were gladdened by a distant glimpse of Canterbury's glorious pile.

Near the junction stands the Hospital of St. Nicholas, originally a group of wooden buildings for lepers, founded by Archbishop Lanfranc in 1084, and now two groups of almshouses. In mediæval times few travellers passed it without bestowing alms on the inmates, some of whom were always in readiness to receive the offerings of the charitable. Erasmus pictures the scene with a few broad touches. As he and his companion rode up one of the old people came out of the houses, "seeming to hear the steps of the

horses. He first sprinkled us," adds the caustic pilgrim, "with holy water, and then offered us the upper leather of a shoe, bound in a brass rim, with a crystal set in its centre like a star. Gratian [Dean Colet] rode on my left hand nearer to the beggar man and was duly sprinkled, bearing it with a tolerable amount of equanimity." But he would not kiss the stone when it was held up, and to comfort the old man for the rejection of the relic Erasmus dropped a coin into his hand. In the hall, where the inmates dine together once a year, is preserved a crystal (traditionally from Becket's shoe), which is supposed to be the identical one that was presented to pilgrims; and another treasure is a mediæval collecting box, with a slit in the lid, which was held out for the alms of the faithful. A yet more storyed survival is behind the hospital. It is the Black Prince's Well, so called from the tradition that the great warrior drank its water when he visited the foundation in 1337 and from his death bed sent for a draught in the hope that it would cure his disease. Nowadays less potent virtues are attributed to the water, which is merely supposed to be "good for the eyes."

Nearly, if not quite, as well trodden in the Middle Ages as the Winchester-Canterbury pilgrims' road was a similar way which runs through a part of Norfolk to Walsingham, then a town of inns. The attraction there was a miraculous

statue of the Virgin, "Our Lady of Walsingham," in the Augustinian priory (founded in 1061, and rebuilt in the fifteenth century), where it stood in a chapel built in 1090, and modelled on the holy house at Nazareth, of which it was said to be a replica. Such was the veneration in which this shrine was held that the Milky Way itself was supposed to point to it, and was in consequence called the "Walsingham Way."

The road passes through Brandon and Fakenham, and is variously known as the "Walsingham Green Way," "Becket's Way," and the "Palmers' Way." Though now literally a green way for miles at a stretch, and well-nigh blocked in parts with overhanging branches, it was regularly traversed in the Middle Ages by the pious of all ranks, kings and queens not excepted, from every part of the Christian world. "The last regal devotee to travel along it," according to Erasmus, "was King Henry VIII., who visited this place [Walsingham], and walked the last two miles from Barsham barefoot, only a few years before he caused the image of 'Our Lady of Walsingham' to be burned with others at Chelsea."

At Houghton St. Giles, on the Walsingham Way, is the most beautiful little wayside chapel (14th century) in England. Pilgrims called at it, left their sandals, and then went on to the shrine (situated about two miles distant) and came back again barefooted. It is to

this custom that Erasmus refers in speaking of Henry VIII.'s visit, and from it the tiny sanctuary is locally known as the "Slipper Chapel." If the building was used for any other purpose than the temporary accommodation of pilgrims, evidence of such use is now lacking, as in the case of other wayside chapels. "No kind of sepulchral memorial," it has been pointed out, "has been discovered within or on the outside of any of these edifices, often as death must have overtaken the pilgrim on his way. Chances of this kind were not provided for by a consecrated space for burial, as the custom of entombing the dead around the sanctuary in which the living assembled for worship was never extended to wayside chapels, neither was the administration of baptism nor the celebration of matrimony included in the duties prescribed to them."[1]

Of minor pilgrims' roads there are many. One mounts the hills from Winchcombe to Hayles, and is probably unique in that it is the shortest route between the places it connects. A much more obscure way runs across Lansdown, near Bath, and was largely used by pious wayfarers who visited Canterbury. Little remains to indicate its history except a holy well and Chapel Farm, which derives its name from the Chapel of St. Lawrence, founded as a hospital

[1] J. C. and C. Buckler, "Remarks upon Wayside Chapels."

St. John's Hospital, Harbledown.
Chapel Farm, Lansdown

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for pilgrims. A portion of the ancient structure is incorporated in the farmhouse.

From Malmesbury to Glastonbury the modern traveller can follow a track along which many pilgrims passed in the Middle Ages. On it, as on most of such roads, there still remains a wayside oratory. The edifice is one of several

The "Slipper Chapel" on the Walsingham way.

chapels or hospitals founded about 1460. "For the relief and entertainment," says one of the historians of Glastonbury,[1] "of devout pilgrims resorting to this holy place, there was not only an hospital built at Glastonbury, but likewise in other places, where they were entertained gratis. There were two such in the neighbourhood, one called the Chappel of Playsters, near

[1] Hearne, "History and Antiquities of Glastonbury," 26.

Box, a town in Wiltshire near the Bath, and the other was a great house called . . . without Lafford's Gate, near Bristol." It is this "Chappel of Playsters," now known as "Chapel Plaster," which still remains. Standing by the wayside south of Ditteridge, near Box, it is a small sanctuary, with a nave and chancel measuring together only 29ft. in length by 9ft. 3in. in width. At the western end was a handsome door, surmounted by a niche, on which stood a figure of the rood, and the upper floor was reached by an exterior staircase.

After the building ceased to be used by pilgrims it was many things by turn, reaching, perhaps, the deepest depths of degradation in the eighteenth century, when it became the resort of a highwayman named Poulter and other pests of the road. This rascal, with his comrade, Burk, robbed a Salisbury doctor on Clarken Down, near Bath, and then returned to Chapel Plaster. Poulter, if what purports to be his own life story[1] may be trusted, asked "Mr. G——," the keeper of the place, "if he had any Gunpowder to load our Pistols with, who took down a Fowling Piece that lay on the Rack in his Kitchen, drew the charge, and gave me the Gunpowder; when I asked M—— G—— [the hostess] for a Spoon and a Pipe to make Two Brace of Balls to load our Pistols with, which

[1] "The Discoveries of John Poulter, alias Baxter."

she gave me, and they both assisted me in making them and in loading our pistols. Burk ask'd M——y G—— if she was not afraid to see us load our pistols; she said, 'No! they are not the first I have seen loaded by night in this kitchen.'" Poulter ultimately swung from the gallows near the scene of many of his crimes. But long after the chapel sheltered such rascals as he it was made to serve as an outhouse to an inn. Buildings, however, like men, sometimes fall to rise again, and such has been the fortunate lot of "Chapel Plaster," which is now used anew for divine worship.

It is possible, moreover, to trace here and there parts of the Beverley pilgrims' road, as well as of numerous other ways formed by devotees who visited lesser-known shrines, of which there were, Taylor[1] states, more than thirty in Norfolk alone.

The main cause of the preservation of the Winchester-Canterbury pilgrims' road and of many other byways was the turnpike system, which existed in more or less vigour for nearly two centuries. While, by its operations, traffic was taxed on all main roads, men naturally availed themselves of every opportunity to escape the collectors. Drovers, in particular, made byways a constant study, because the dues payable on their charges would, had they been

[1] "Index Monasticus," 60.

taken along the general channels of communication, have amounted to a considerable sum ; and they profited so much thereby that at any time during the turnpike era they were able to go from one town to another without paying any tolls, except, perhaps, at their starting point and destination. The old roads were thus kept open and made for us a precious heritage.

CHAPTER VI.

Tudor and Stuart Roads.

Reaching the Tudor and Stuart periods, we are able for the first time to visualize the King's highway. The result is a little surprising; for we see at a glance that it varied much more than it does now. Made up as it was of ways which differed greatly, not in degree merely, but in kind, some primitive and contemptible, and others brilliant examples in road-making to all the ages, it was at once mean and splendid, a makeshift and a monument of engineering skill.

Between some towns extended massive causeways that bore the traffic well. A "stone causay" having "diverse archlets" connected the Dorset towns of Sherborne and Shaftesbury, and, apparently, ran straighter than the present road. By an Act passed in 1554, it was ordered to be repaired at the cost of the owners and farmers of the land lying near it on either side and by the inhabitants of the hundreds and parishes through which it passed; and the statute seems to have answered its purpose, inasmuch as it was more than once renewed. Bristol and Gloucester were linked together by a similar causeway, which in the same year was also ordered to be amended, the Act, after

reciting that hitherto it had been well repaired by the devotion of "dyvers good people," providing that the cost should be a charge on the inhabitants of Bristol and Gloucester and certain hundreds in the county of Gloucester. There were, too, many excellent stone ways, or paved roads, most of them of Roman origin. The name of Stanway, Gloucestershire, comes from a stone road which ran from London to Tewkesbury, and the Essex Stanway probably has a similar derivation.

Another class of roads consisted of high ways,[1] which were roads elevated above the surrounding country. Enfield Highway, the name now borne by that portion of the Cheshunt and Hertford Road which enters Enfield parish at Ponder's End, indicates one that lay on the track of Ermine Street, at this time part of the North Road. Similar, perhaps, was a "high way adjoyninge to the Cittye of Chester, called Huntington Lane," two miles and a half in length or thereabouts, which was "well amended and repaired" about 1545, when Parliament made a curious provision for its future upkeep. Following a practice of mediæval times, when grants were made to hermits and religious bodies in return for their undertaking to maintain specific roads and bridges, it enacted that certain

[1] From the fifteenth to the seventeenth century "highway" was two words. Used originally to denote a raised road, it gradually became less restricted in meaning, till it was applied to any public road.

privileges, which included grazing, should be given to a man on condition that he kept it in order.

Hollow ways also existed in plenty. The opposite of high ways, they were beneath the level of the adjacent land, and were either the beds of diverted or dried-up streams or else deep channels worn by the traffic of centuries.[1] Holloway, in the north of London, owes its name to such a road, which ran through the valley between Islington and Highgate, and was at one time tended by the occupant of a hermitage at Highgate. Many of these sunken roads were comparatively good, being more firm and hard than the ordinary ways; but ultimately some of them became so deep that the hubs of wheels pressed against the banks. In one case a wagon which was toiling along such a road was cleared by stag, hounds, and horsemen.

Here and there, moreover, was a road so much wider than the generality that it was called a broad way. It is from the inclusion of such lines in the Tudor and Stuart highway systems that Broadway occurs so frequently among our place-names. Habington, whose itinerary in early Stuart times included the Worcestershire Broad-

[1] Some of such ways, locally known as "hollow lanes," are still features of the neighbourhood of Selborne, though they have altered a good deal since Gilbert White described them. "These roads, running through the malm lands, are, by the traffick of ages, and the fretting of water, worn down through the first stratum of one freestone, and partly through the second; so that they look more like water-courses than roads, and are bedded with naked rag for furlongs together. In many places they are reduced sixteen or eighteen feet beneath the level of the fields; and after floods, and in frosts, exhibit very grotesque and wild appearances, from the tangled roots that are twisted among the strata, and from the torrents rushing down their broken sides."—"Natural History of Selborne" (1877), i. 11.

way, refers to that village as "the Broad and highe waye from the Shepherdes' coates which on the mounted woldes shelter themsalfes vnder hylles from the rage of stormes downe to the most fruytfull vale of Eusham."[1] The original "Broade and high waye" winds up the hill near the metalled road, and is still used, though not by wheeled traffic.

Such were the good roads of Tudor and Stuart times. With them, criss-crossing them at all angles, were many so bad that they hampered the trade of the whole kingdom. "Speaking generallie" of them, an Elizabethan writer condemns them soundly. He says that "in the claie or cledgie soil they are often verie deepe and troublesome in the winter halfe," that "such as have land lieing upon the sides of the waies do uterlie neglect to dich and scowre their draines and water-courses for better avoidance of the winter waters," that "the streets do grow to be much more gulled than before, and thereby verie noisome for such as trauel by the same," and "that the trees and bushes growing by the streets sides do not a little keepe off the force of the sune in summer for drieng up of the lanes."[2]

It was not only the minor ways which had these faults; some main channels of communication were little, if any, better, and a few roads, consisted of nothing but roughly parallel tracks, which in parts were difficult to distinguish

[1] "Survey of Worcestershire," ii. 34-5.
[2] W. Harrison, Holinshed's "Chronicles" (1586), i. 113-14.

A Church Tower Cressel

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from the wild heaths over which they ran. In 1660 Pepys found the road through Epping Forest good "only in one path," which he and his companions kept, he says, "as if we had rode through a kennel all the way."[1] When, again, Mary de Medicis, Queen Mother of France, came to England in 1638, she remained at Harwich for a week, and the "roads" were, a contemporary chronicler records, "so beaten by the frequent passing of gentlemen who their Majesties of Great Britain sent to the Queen, in order to be informed every day of the state of her health, that strangers needed no guide to that place."[2] The risk of going astray was such, in fact, that many beacons were dotted over the highways for the guidance of travellers, and regular provision was made for lighting them after nightfall.

Dunston Pillar.

A curious relic of these adjuncts of the road survives in Dunston Pillar, probably the last land lighthouse erected in this country. It stands on the fringe of Lincoln Heath, and was built by Sir Francis Dashwood in 1751 for the purpose of directing travellers over that then open space, on which numbers went astray. A lantern was

[1] Pepys' "Diary," February 28th, 1659-60.

[2] "Antiquarian Repertory," iv., 524.

placed on the summit, and lighted at night, doubtless greatly to the advantage of many a belated wayfarer, though it is recorded that a postboy, told, when returning home, to keep it on his right hand, went round and round it all night. In place of the lantern, which became useless after the heath was enclosed, there is now a statue of George III., set up in 1810 by Lord Buckinghamshire.

To the same end, many churches in wooded districts were converted into lighthouses after nightfall. On Hadley Church, Middlesex, which stands on high ground known, at least as early as the reign of Elizabeth, as Beacon's Hill, there is a cresset which is believed to have been lighted occasionally for the benefit of travellers through Enfield Chase, and certainly the church at Weldon, Northamptonshire, was a beacon for those who traversed the tracks in Rockingham Forest. On the tower is a cupola or lantern, about 15ft. high by 5ft. wide, and glazed on each side, which is still fitted with ample, if primitive, provision for lighting. For from the dome of the interior, access to which is obtained by a trap door in the roof of the bell chamber, hangs a wooden candelabra of eight-candle capacity, and bearing round the sides sixteen branched candlesticks, also of wood. By means of this arrangement the cupola was illuminated on dark nights for the guidance of travellers in the adjoining forest;

and the custom is now commemorated by fully lighting up the lantern on Christmas Eve and on New Year's Eve.

A further consequence of the state of the highways was that travellers were generally obliged to employ guides, not only on cross-country routes, but on the principal lines of traffic. Frequented as the Holyhead Road was in the seventeenth century, those who journeyed along it were nearly always accompanied by guides. Even with this precaution, moreover, it was not uncommon for wayfarers to go astray in some parts of the country. Pepys was careful to hire natives to show him the way over so frequented a hill as Hindhead; but several times he travelled in the wrong direction, once on the Bath Road between Reading and Newbury, and only on a single occasion so fortunately as on Salisbury Plain, where, "by a happy mistake, and that looked like an adventure," he and his wife "were carried out of our way to a town where we would lie, since we could not go so far as we would. . . . By and by to bed, glad of this mistake," he notes, "because it seems, had we gone on as we intended, we could not have passed with our coach, and must have lain on the plain all night."[1]

Guides were well-nigh invariably requisitioned for the passage over a peculiar class of roads

[1] Pepys' "Diary," June 11th and 16th, August 6th, 1668.

which are frequently mentioned in Tudor and Stuart annals, namely, those covered by the sea at high tide. The most used was the way over the Wash, the scene of King John's dramatic loss of treasures in 1216, and the regular track was from Cross Keys to Sutton Crosses. A son of Sir Thomas Browne, who entered Lincolnshire by it in 1662, describes the event minutely. "Wee were fferried crosse the water to old Lin," he says, "and from thence we went to the Cross Keys, a place where they ordinarily goe on to the Wash: where, taking a guide, it being somewhat late, wee desired to bee conducted in the nighest way to Boston. Hee told us there were two waies to passe, either over two short cuts or else quite over the long Wash, which latter wee chose, partly because it was the nighest, but chiefly for the novelty to us of this manner of travailing at the bottome of the sea. . . . The way is not all alike, for some is a hard sand, other a softer, and some like a fine green meddow, whose grasse is nothing but glasswort; through all which, together with divers rivers, which are easily fordable at low tide, our convoy made such haste with his fliing horse that hee landed us on the banks in Lincolnshire in lesse then two hours, quite crosse this equitable sea or navigable land, fourteen miles in length."[1]

As late as 1775, notwithstanding that by then

[1] Works of Sir T. Browne (ed. Wilkin), i. 23-4.

successive reclamations had reduced the passage to about six miles, a guide attended at Cross Keys to conduct travellers over the Wash, and it was not till 1831 that fields and meadows succeeded to the sands of old. The Great Northern Railway now marks the line of the Wash road and the traditional spot where disaster befell King John.

Many travellers to Ireland reached Anglesey by a similar road over the sands at the entrance of the Menai. This passage was uncovered for only a short time at low water, and, partly for this reason, and partly because a channel in the middle was not fordable, but had to be crossed by a ferry, good judgment and brisk riding were necessary to gain the opposite shore. Sir John Bramston and his son were among the many travellers who, in making the hazardous journey from bank to bank, narrowly escaped being swept away by the tide. When they reached the channel the water was already up to their horses' girths, and the ferrymen, who were on the other side, drunk, ignored their summons. Young Bramston, fearing the worst, but prepared to make a struggle for life, anxiously asked his father if he could swim. Fortunately, however, the bemused brains of the ferrymen temporarily cleared at this moment, and the two men were rescued from their critical position.

Another, and a still more dreaded, over-sands road was that across Morecambe bay, till the

making of the Furness Railway, with its viaducts spanning the estuaries of the Kent and Leven, the chief route to the Lakes. Guides had been maintained for this dangerous way in Plantagenet times, and, indeed, they were an institution by the reign of Edward I. Under the Tudor kings, up to the Reformation, they were provided by the Priors of Cartmel and Coniston, and then the Duchy of Lancaster founded an association of guides, whose duty it was daily to sound the channels of the Kent and Keer for safe fords, mark them with "brobs and savins," and between tides personally conduct wayfarers across the sands. There was an unbroken succession of representatives of this body not merely through the Stuart period, but from beginning to end of the coaching age, and one of the race still survives at Grange-over-Sands, where he occupies a farm rent free on condition that he shall guide a traveller across the bay whenever called upon so to do.

In Tudor and Stuart times the way over the estuary was largely used. There was a great lull in the traffic at the dissolution of Furness Abbey, to and from which had wended strings of richly-caparisoned ecclesiastics and nobles, whose retinues trailed far across the sands; but during the Civil War and the Commonwealth the human tide again ran strong, though with less dazzle and glitter. Death, too, frequently overtook units

in the long processions. As the registers of Cartmel Priory and of Bolton-le-Sands show, many lives were lost through shifting sands, the incoming tide, unsuspected channels, nightfall, or sea mists. The records of this old road, indeed, are full of tragedies.

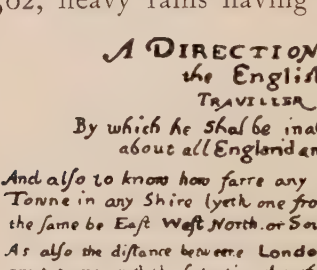
There were other roads over estuaries, as well as a few running along the seashore, that the pious wayfarer never traversed without a prayer. If he reached one of them at dead low water, he could ride over it in safety, provided he could skirt the quicksands; but at other times he had to wait for hours or else run the risk of being engulfed by the rising tide, and that this was a real risk many parish registers attest.

It is also significant that at this period travellers commonly bestowed alms on men who were working on the roads. Pepys mentions the custom. Under date June 6th, 1668, he records: "On the highway, to menders of the highway, 6d."; and three days later he notes a further gift of 2s. to the road-menders.

We see, then, that in Tudor and Stuart times the highway system was like a patchwork, made up of diverse patterns and materials, good in parts but, as a whole, bad, formless, and irregular, the product of chance rather than of careful design.

Under such conditions communication was, at best, necessarily hazardous. To the highest

personages in the land a journey was always difficult, and sometimes impossible. Roads similar to those along which, in 1554, Wyatt's followers struggled to London, there to be met with cries of "Draggle-tails!" in allusion to the quantity of mud on them, prevented an interview which had been arranged between Elizabeth and Mary in 1562, heavy rains having converted the ways


A DIRECTION FOR
the English
TRAVELLER
By which he shal be inabled to Coast
about all England and Wales
And also to know how farre any Market or noteable
Towne in any Shire lyeth one from an other and whether
the same be East West North or Southfrom ye Shire Towne
As also the distance betweene London and any other Shire or
great towne with the situation thereof East. West. North or South
from London
By the help also of this worke one may know (in what
Parish Village or Mansion house soeuer he be in)
What Shires he is to passe through &
which way he is to travell
till he come to his
Journeys
End
Infelix curus nulli Sapientia prodest
Are to be Sold by Mathew Simons
the goldon Lion in Ducke lane Anº 1635.

Title-Page of an Early Road Book.

into quagmires; and if in Stuart times there was no such impediment to a royal journey, it was only because of the elaborate preparations made for it beforehand. In 1623 the Duke of Richmond and six other noblemen went to Southampton to arrange pageants and for the

repair of highways for the reception of the Infanta.[1] There was still more provision of the same kind in 1633, justices receiving the royal command to repair the North Road, and arrange for a way through private grounds where the ordinary way was not "easy for coaches," in readiness for the King's visit to Scotland.[2] A further development took place in 1662. Charles II. referred to the mending of the ways for a "royal passage" even in his speech to the House of Commons. After announcing that he wished to leave town at Easter, he begged that the ways might be mended, so that the Queen might enter with decency, and not find Whitehall surrounded with water.[3]

At this period, indeed, England's rulers experienced so much discomfort in travelling that the duty of improving roads over which they passed was entrusted to a royal "way-maker," who had to apply the goad to justices and others. In 1609 Thomas Norton held this important office, and we find him struggling with the problem of repairing "the high wayes leadinge to and from the Citty of London to the towns of Royston and Newmarket for his Ma[ties] better

[1] State Papers (Dom.), 1619-23, p. 608. [2] Ibid., 1631-33, p. 571.

[3] State Papers (Dom.), 1661-62, p. 294. In most towns much of the work necessary for the maintenance of the roads was still left top rivate effort, and even at Oxford the authorities seem not to have been fully alive to civic responsibilities. "A doctor in Oxford, at his own charges, was mending a causeway, and a nobleman riding by said, 'How now, doctor? I see you are mending the highway, but it is not the highway to heaven. 'No, my lord,' says he. 'If it were, I should have wondered to see you come this way.'"—Capt. Will. Hickes, "Oxford Drolleries and Jests" (1660).

passage in goeing and cominge to his recreations in those parts." He was still engaged on the task in 1625, when, having apparently come to the conclusion that the justices were hopeless, he made the heroic resolve to undertake the work himself, if he might be empowered to compel the services of carts and labourers.[1] This was not by any means an uncommon result of a conflict between the surveyor to the King and the justices or other persons responsible. Charles I., while on his way from Lambeth to Greenwich in 1639, was compelled to alight from his coach to pass over a bridge which had been broken by heavy carts laden with bricks and stone. The owner of the carts was one Richard Canning, of Newington. As he refused to mend the bridge, "I was," the King's surveyor reported, "constrained to lay out my own money, and with great care performed it myself."[2] The same story is repeated over and over again. Under the Stuart rulers there was continuous strife between the royal "way-mender" and the persons responsible for the maintenance of roads and bridges, and in general victory seems to have rested with those who defied the law.

One of the causes of complaints in the Stuart period was the narrowness of roads. At least as early as the reign of Elizabeth attention had been drawn to the "daily encroaching of the covetous,"

[1] Ibid., 1623-25, p. 541.

[2] State Papers (Dom.), 1639, p. 363.

who enclosed strips of the King's highway. "Whereas," says a chronicler, "some streets within these five and twenty yeares have been in most places fiftie foot broad, according to the law, whereby the traveller might either escape the steepe, or shift the mir, or paesse the loaden cart without danger of himselfe and his horse, now they are brought into twelve, or twentie, or six and twentie at the most."[1] This filching appears to have continued, with the result that many roads became narrower, instead of broader, and could not bear all the traffic thrown upon them. But in some cases the narrowness of roads was due, not to the greed of landowners, but to the circumstance that such "roads" were, in fact, only bridle paths, and were never intended for wheeled traffic. On even the Holyhead Road there were parts which travellers approached with dire apprehensions and left behind them with a sigh of relief. The terrors of the descent of Penmaenmawr, in particular, are dilated upon by many writers. Camden describes the road at this point as a "narrow pathway for passengers, rocks hanging over one above and the raging sea beneath"; and narrow indeed it was. In the next century the Lord Lieutenant approved a scheme for making it "nowhere less than 4ft. wide," and by 1770 it had been broadened to 7ft. and "protected" in the most terrifying parts by a wall 1ft. high!

[1] W. Harrison, Holinshed's "Chronicles" (1586), i. 114.

In consequence of the small space available, roads had become more and more congested as traffic increased with the growth of trade and population, till at last they were frequently crowded and occasionally blocked. "A traveller," according to a clerk of Trinity College, Cambridge, had to give "way (sometimes) to hundreds of Pack-horses, Panniers, Whifflers, Coaches, Wagons, Wains, Carts," which were "very grievous to weary and loaden Travellers, but more especially near the City and upon a Market day. A man, having travell'd a long and tedious journey, his Horse well-nigh spent," was at times, the clerk stated, "compell'd to cross out of his way twenty times in one miles Riding by the irregularity and peevish crossness of such like Whifflers and Market Women." Nor did contending for the way end at mere bickering. "Too often" it proved "mortal or of very bad consequence to many."[1]

That the Legislature was not insensible of the great inconvenience and enormous loss arising from the state of the highways is shown by its activity in strengthening the laws relating to them. In Stuart times statutes aiming at road improvement were passed in quick succession, and orders and proclamations to the same end, many of them couched in the most arbitrary terms, issued from Whitehall with a frequency hitherto unknown. Charles II. moved himself

[1] T. Mace, "Profit Conveniency, and Pleasure to the Whole Nation."

in other ways for the benefit of travellers, ultimately conferring on them a great boon, the first road book worthy of the name ever published in English.

There had previously been placed on the market several more or less faulty productions of this kind. As early as 1625 John Norden had published "An Intended Guyde for English Travailers," which is composed of nothing more than tables of distances. Its users did not, it is to be feared, heed the injunction printed at the foot of every page, "Beare with defectes"; for the distances, being calculated from the rude maps of the period, are invariably wrong. York is said to be only 150 miles from London, Carlisle 217 miles, Bristol 99 miles, St. David's 195 miles, and Exeter 143 miles. To the compiler "mile" was an indefinite term. "I haue," he says under the table for Yorkshire, "observed by trauaile in these Northerne [parts] miles much exceede the miles in South and Westerne parts of the Kingdome, which may something deceiue a Stranger."

"A Direction for the English Traviller" had also been issued. First published in 1635, this work, notwithstanding the promise held out on the title-page, that from it "one may know . . . which way he is to trauell till he come to his journies end," is only a slight improvement upon Norden's work, containing as it does only tables of distances, supplemented by tiny maps.

the largest of which is about the size of a penny.

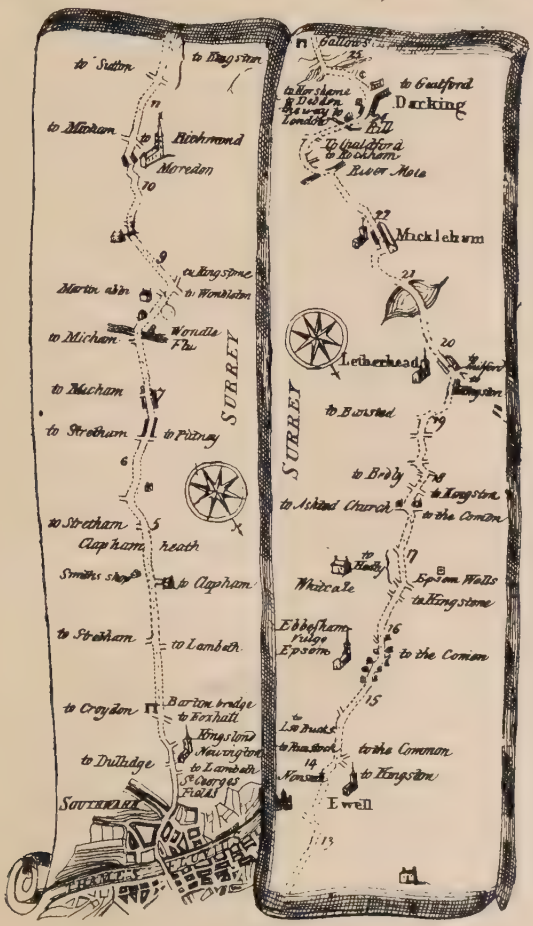
Compilers of almanacks, too, had begun to circulate more or less imperfect itineraries. In Cardanus Rider's "British Merlin" is a "true and plain description of the high-ways in England and Wales," consisting of routes, as :

From London to Exeter, 138 miles, thus : From London to Stains 15 mil, then to Bagshot 8 mil, thence to Harttlerow 8 mil, then to Basingstoke 8 mil, then to Andover 16 mil, thence to Salisbury 15 mil, thence to Shaftesbury 18 mil, then to Sherborne 12 mil, thence to Crookhorn 10 mil, thence to Card 6 mil, thence to Honniton 10 mil, thence to Exeter 12 miles.

But the earliest road book embodying the fruits of a real survey was that undertaken at the cost of Charles II., Ogilby's "Britannia," a work composed of letterpress descriptions of the principal highways, accompanied by beautifully engraved maps showing their course. The compiler, who held the offices of "His Majesty's Cosmographer and Master of His Majesty's Revels in the Kingdom of Ireland," justifiably claimed that the distances in his book were obtained by "actual admeasurement," which, as shown by a figure on the allegorical title-page, was taken by a wheel similar to, if not identical with, that now in use.

So excellent was Ogilby's work that, though the compiler, in self-defence, published his book in a cheaper and much less bulky form than the original folio, it was the basis of many guides to the roads, Grub Street hacks pilfering from it wholesale for more than a century. Daniel

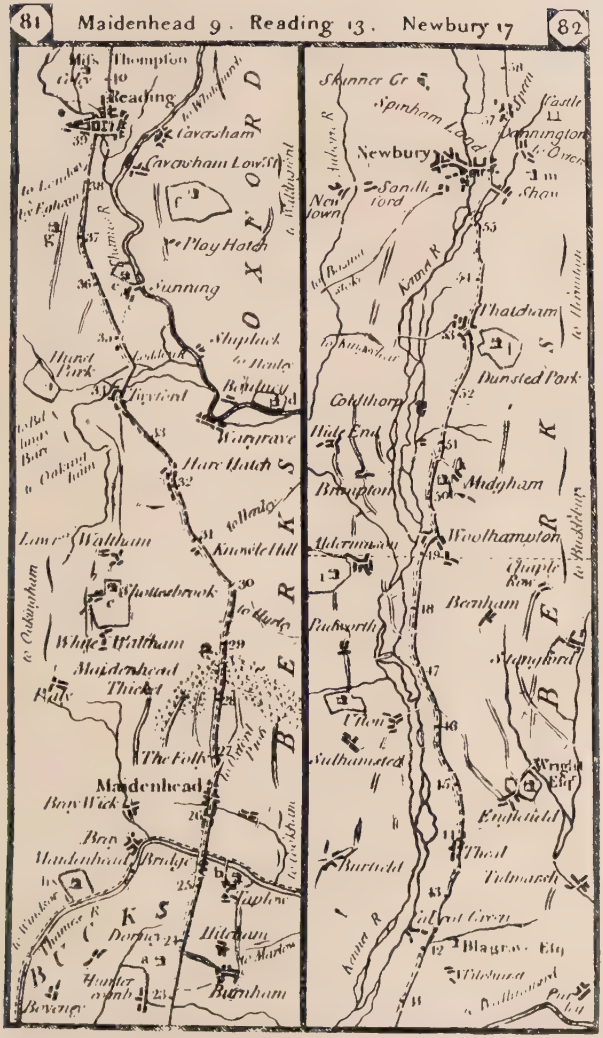
Paterson, an Army captain, published in 177[illegible] the first edition of his "Roads," which became



Strip Map of the Road to Dorking.
Ogilby's "Britannia."

the "Bradshaw" of the coaching age, and a few years later issued his "Itinerary," a work which, like Ogilby's, contained strip maps of the principal roads. But the next "admeasurement" to that of Charles II.'s cosmographer was made by John Cary, who set forth the results in his "New Itinerary," published in 1798, and subsequently reissued again and again, with an increase in bulk every time. Even Cary's measurements, however, notwithstanding that they were made by direction of the Postmaster-General and under official supervision, could have been, in some cases, only approximately accurate; for the surveyor relied, as regards certain of the southern cross-roads, on the judgment of a well-known pedestrian, George Wilson, who claimed to estimate correctly the distance between any two places by the time he occupied in walking it.

With this and one or two other important exceptions, however, Stuart attempts to cope with road problems were signal failures. That there had been little improvement in communication generally up to the Civil War is evident from many details connected with that conflict. It is notably shown by the capture of 800 horses through their sticking in the mud, as well as by references in Cromwell's despatches to particular roads. In 1648, after the battle of Preston, Langdale's vanquisher made a scathing report on the part of Watling Street between Wigan and



Strip Map of Part of the Bath Road.
Paterson's "New Itinerary."

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Preston, which he had found exceptionally bad. "We lay that night," he said, "in a field close by the Enemy [near Wigan]; being very dirty and weary, having marched twelve miles of such ground as I never rode in all my life, the day being very wet." There is no reason to believe, moreover, that the roads were any better subsequently till after the Revolution.

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CHAPTER VII.

Restrictions on Traffic.

One of the Stuart efforts to improve communication had momentous and long-continued results. Owing to the increasing use of vehicles, the Legislature had, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, to choose whether to adapt the roads to wheeled traffic or adapt wheeled traffic to the roads. It elected to impose limitations on the use of vehicles, and thus initiated a vexatious policy which was a cardinal feature of highway administration for two centuries and an impediment to commerce and industry in all parts of the country.

This retrograde action was, as we have seen,[1] first taken in towns. But as early as 1618 a serious check was placed on the development of transport generally; for a proclamation issued in that year, after reciting that the recent decay of highways and bridges was due to the common carriers, who had four-wheeled wagons, drawn by eight, nine, or ten horses, and carrying 60cwt. or 70cwt. at a time, whereas they had formerly used two-wheeled carts carrying 20cwt., directed that no four-wheeled wagon was to be drawn by more than five horses, on pain of contempt and indictment as a nuisance. This step was

[1] *Ante*, p. 30.

soon followed by others, some of which were probably taken in consequence of the condition of such roads as were the "royal passage."

About this time the justices were often admonished on account of the state of highways over which the King had travelled or might travel. In September, 1621, the justices of Surrey, Essex, Middlesex, Hertford, Cambridge, and Huntingdon were ordered to take steps for the amendment of the roads before the winter set in, "especially in those places where the King may have occasion to pass";[1] and similar commands were issued in the following reign, as well as in that of Charles II. Again and again, too, particular roads were singled out for animadversion. To the highways near Royston much attention had to be given, as on several occasions James I. complained of their condition, and the Newmarket Road, over which the Stuart Kings often travelled, also greatly troubled the justices. James I., and still more Charles II., were frequent visitors to that town, the one for the sake of the coursing, and the other to join in the sport for which it is still world famous. It was by way of Rye House and Rickling Church End that Charles II. travelled, his route falling into the present road at Newport, where the old highway is known as "London Lane." Near the junction stands a plaster-fronted dwelling.

[1] State Papers (Dom.), 1619-23, p. 291.

variously called the "Crown House," "Nell Gwynne's House," and the "Horn Inn," that is traditionally associated with the Merry

A Stuart Posting Inn: Nell Gwynne's House, Newport.

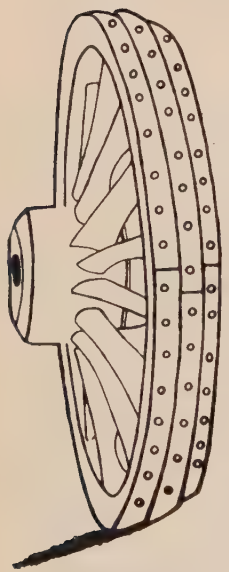
Monarch's journeys to and from Newmarket; for it is said to have been a posting establishment in the early part of the seventeenth century and to have been patronised by Charles II., Nell

Gwynne, the Earl of Rochester, and many other distinguished travellers.

Badgered by Whitehall, and smarting under the ever-growing cost of road maintenance consequent on the increase of wheeled traffic, the justices of Hertfordshire in 1622 proposed that heavy four-wheeled carts should be suppressed ;[1] and James I., having stated that the judges had declared that " extraordinary carriages " on highways were common nuisances and annoyances, prohibited a carrier or any other person whatever from travelling with any wain, cart, or carriage with more than two wheels, containing more than 20cwt., or drawn by more than five horses at once. This edict, whatever may have been its effect in other parts of the country, brought about so little improvement in the main channel of communication through Hertfordshire that the justices asked for further restrictions on traffic, which was in consequence soon regulated locally to a remarkable extent. Maltsters and loaders were wholly prohibited from using carts from Royston to Buntingford between All Saints' and May Day, and a little later the justices were empowered to restrain carts and carriages between Buntingford and Ware.[2]

The principle of imposing restraints upon transit having been thus established, proclamation

[1] State Papers (Dom.), 1619-23, p. 416.
[2] State Papers (Dom.), 1633, pp. 232, 305-6.

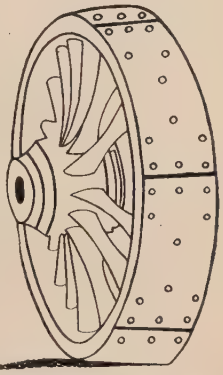


A Conical Wheel.

after proclamation was issued with a view to enforcing and extending it; and by the middle of the eighteen h century many Acts had been added to the Statute Book for the purpose of preserving the highways by such means. The number of horses to be used in a cart or wagon, the weight to be carried, the kind and number of the shafts, the width of the wheels were all limited by law with minute care and with provisions against evasions which fostered the evils they were designed to check.

Wheels, in particular, were subject to a multitude of restrictions. The crusade against them began in 1662, when an Act was passed ordaining that no wagon or other vehicle should be employed for certain purposes if its wheel tyres were less than 4in. wide. This interdiction was quickly suspended by proclamation; but the respite was only brief. Though the objectionable clause was formally repealed by a later Act (22 Charles II., c. 12), a limitation on tyres was re-imposed, and then gradually strengthened, till, at last, in 1753, Parliament entered on a new policy still further to increase their width.

Carts and wagons were allowed to pay less toll in proportion to the breadth covered by their wheels, and ultimately vehicles upon wheels 16in. broad, called "rollers," were declared absolutely toll free for one year from Michaelmas, 1753, and after the expiration of such term to be subject to not more than one-half the tolls for 6in. wheels, while those with wheels less than 6in. broad were ordered to pay double charges.



Eight-Inch Cylindrical Wheel.

The action of the Legislature was based on the theory that, whereas broad wheels tended to preserve and consolidate the roads, narrow ones cut them up and were "instruments of destruction"—a theory which agitated the country for generations. In the House of Commons it was debated again and again. Experts in mechanics rushed into the fray with weighty treatises illustrated with incomprehensible diagrams.[1] Elaborate models were made to demonstrate the superiority of the broad over the narrow wheel and *vice versa*. Finally, after the question had been fought and wrangled over for about a century, a Parliamentary committee

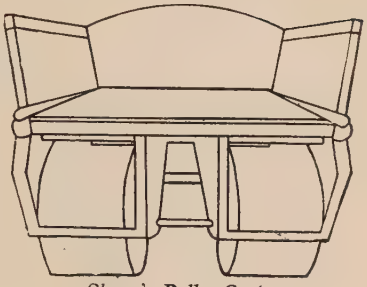
[1] *e.g.*, "Observations on the Effects which Carriage Wheels with Rims of Different Shape have on the Roads," by Alexander Cumming.

considered it anew, and presented several bulky reports in which it was discussed at appalling length.

Of the controversialists, Daniel Bourn, who championed the broad wheel, was by far the most vehement. "A narrow-wheeled cart," he wrote, "has a yet more baneful, destructive effect than has the same kind of wagon, and ought to be sought after and destroyed as a nuisance with the same eagerness and detestation with which we would pursue a venomous beast." Then, turning to the broad-wheeled wagon, he rose to lyrical heights. "See how sweetly that machine moves along! How goodly the horses in couplets step like soldiers on duty! With what a constant, steady, swimming pace it rolls along the path! How fine, smooth, and even it hardens and planifies the face thereof, and makes it almost impenetrable!"

Bourn, however, was not a wholly disinterested advocate. It was through him, according to his own account, that broad wheels were introduced. "The first set of broad wheels made use of in roads in this kingdom," he says, "were erected by Jas. Morris, of Brock Forge, near Wiggan, in Lancashire, who, having a deep, bad road to pass with his team, advised with me upon the subject. I mentioned the making of the fellies of his wheels of an uncommon width. He accordingly made his first set 13in., and the next year

another of 9in. in the sole; and his travelling with these to Liverpool, Warrington, and other places was took notice of by some persons of distinction . . . who reported their utility to the House, which occasioned an Act of Parliament being made in their favour."[1] Bourn was, moreover, the inventor of an "improved wagon," the wheels of which were hollow rims or cylinders of iron, about 2ft. high and 16in. broad, with a wooden block in the interior. Though its praises were sounded from the housetops, it was actually much more curious than useful. In 1764 it was pitted against one of the standard broad-wheeled wagons, and "did not answer, the common wagon going as easy with four horses as the new one with eight."[2] Little more successful were vehicles on the same principle which were subsequently introduced by William Sharp, a coachmaker, of Leadenhall Street. Sharp's cart, of which much was expected, and the wheels of which were under the body and resembled lawn rollers, picked up so much mud that its use was impracticable. Naturally, the blame for the



Sharp's Roller Cart.

[1] "A Treatise upon Wheeled Carriages." [2] *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxxiv. 194.

failure of Bourn's wagon and Sharp's improvements on it was laid on the roads which they were to have preserved and freed from ruts!

From the outset wagon proprietors and most other owners of heavy vehicles were strongly opposed not only to the broad wheel, but to restrictions on draught, etc., and set themselves to defeat the object of the Legislature. As the wheels prescribed by Parliament were very heavy, a set only 9in. wide weighing 30cwt. or 40cwt., and as they necessarily set up a good deal of surface resistance, additional horses were needed to draw wagons to which they were attached, and consequently it was common to carry out the law in the letter only. This was done by contriving that such wheels should press on a surface little, if any, more than one-third of their nominal width. By bevelling the edges and raising the middle of the periphery, bevelling the whole periphery and building up the inner edge considerably higher than the other, or studding the tyre with rose-headed nails so close together that they formed a practically continuous band, 9in. wheels were made to "bite" about as much ground as those only 3in. wide, and to run as easily. Some "rollers," however, were introduced soon after 1772, though they were seldom used on other than turnpike roads; and the Legislature eventually provided that all tyres should be flat and without projecting nails.

A further enactment with regard to wheels led to a more remarkable evasion. By a statute of 1751 was fixed the distance between a pair of wheels at the bottom. This limitation, instead of benefiting the roads, proved positively injurious to them, because all wheels were the same distance apart and ran in the same tracks, with the result that the ruts became deeper than ever. Conscious then of the mistake, Parliament hastily amended the Act, which a practical man[1] called a "most dreadful one," and made the clause respecting the distance between wheels permissive instead of compulsory. But the mischief was done, and carriers dare not attempt to undo it. If they had put their wheels further apart, they would have been in constant danger of being upset; if, on the other hand, they had brought them closer together, they would have been momentarily in peril of sticking in the mire through the sides of the rut coming in contact with their wheels.

It was on the shape of wheels, however, that the Act had the most unlooked-for effect. Nothing being said as to the distance these should be apart at the top, carriers had their axle-trees bent and fitted with conical wheels, some of which were at the top as much as 17in. out of the perpendicular, and by this means they secured, while maintaining the legal width of track, greater room for the body of a wagon. There

[1] W. Deacon "Observations on Stage Wagons," etc.

was a serious drawback to the use of such wheels, and that was friction, which was frequently so great as to fire the clumsy, lumbering vehicles. In 1759 one laden with the scenery and wardrobe of the Bath Theatre was crossing Salisbury Plain, when somebody warned the driver that his wheels would soon take fire. Laughing lightly, he remarked that he had come twelve miles with them smoking, and kept on his way. Just before the wagon reached Salisbury flames burst from it, and it was soon reduced to ashes. The damage was estimated at £2,000.[1] But conical wheels, despite their demerits, found much favour with the proprietors of wagons and other heavy vehicles.

Besides inveighing against the law, carriers bitterly complained of the manner in which it was enforced. The number of horses allowed to draw a wagon was in proportion to the width of its wheels, and surveyors, toll collectors, and others were empowered to check breaches of the Act—a power they freely exercised. Four drays laden with beer were stopped at the Islington turnpike in 1754 because the number of horses in each was one more than that allowed by the Legislature, and were not liberated till a messenger could be sent to the brewery, and somebody could convey thence to the turnpike the prescribed penalty of £5 for each unauthorised horse, or £20 in all.[2] A few years later numerous farmers

[1] "British Chronology," 451. [2] *London Magazine*, xxiii. 474.

suffered for like breaches of the law. At Chippenham in 1755 two were each fined £5,[1] and in 1758 a Langhope (Gloucestershire) owner of one of the handicapped narrow-wheeled vehicles was made to pay the same penalty, while the driver of it was sent to prison for a month.[2]

For many years there was a similar restriction on the weight to be carried by vehicles. In 1741 the Legislature prescribed that the utmost draught in any cart or wagon should be 60cwt., and gave the trustees appointed to repair any roads authority to erect weighing machines, and to take, in addition to the tolls already granted, 20s. per hundredweight for any draught in excess of the maximum stated. By an Act of 1747, also, a penalty of £20 was imposed for unloading in order to evade the fine of 20s. per hundredweight.[3] In consequence of the statute of 1741, many weighing machines were erected on roads, where they soon became a terror to owners of vehicles.

One of their comparatively early victims was a Kent farmer, who in 1764 was stopped at the Surrey turnpike as he was returning home with a load of manure. The cart, on being weighed,

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxv. 232. [2] *Annual Register*, 1758, p. 12.

[3] One-half of this and of other fines for carrying overweight and similar offences was to be applied to the amendment of the roads; but the highways benefited very little in consequence. In and about London it was found that regular users of a road made arrangements whereby the lessees of weighing machines passed their carts without penalising them, and that only chance-comers were made to pay the fines imposed by law. For this and other reasons all the trusts within one hundred miles of London had by about 1833 voluntarily abolished weighing machines.

was found to contain about 4cwt. more than the limitation, whereupon the collector demanded the penalty prescribed by the statute, and, on this being refused, seized a horse. For the recovery of the animal an action was brought; but a verdict was given for the defendant, who, it was proved, had acted within his legal rights.[1] The trading community of London was also hard hit by the machines. From Twickenham two loads of oilcakes were sent to the metropolis at a cost of twenty guineas for fines alone; and at Islington a man who was unable to pay £3 18s. in respect of overweight had to suffer the loss of two horses, which were pounded and sold. In another case an Edmonton farmer was adjudged at Islington to be liable to a fine of 3s. for overweight, and on getting to Ball's Pond with the same load was made to pay 7s.[2]

Carriers and horse-owners had a further grievance. They were robbed by common informers, who flourished exceedingly while the Legislature applied its collective wisdom to regulating traffic. In 1707 the London carriers complained bitterly of these despicable myrmidons of the law, alleging that they seized horses worth £10 and sold them to their accomplices for £3;[3] and a few years later the wagon carriers drew the attention of Parliament to the exactions of such rogues in

[1] *Annual Register*, 1764, p. 93.
[2] Report of Committee on Turnpike Acts (1796).
[3] "The Case of the Wagon Carriers."

connection with an Act of 7 Queen Anne, which provided that no travelling wagon should be drawn with more than six horses, except at steep hills or foul places where an additional horse, taken from a cart or another wagon on the road, might be used. "If," said the petitioners, "they [the carriers] put another horse (if not belonging to a wagon then travelling that road) when at a stand, and under the greatest difficulties in foul places or going up steep hills, to prevent their spoiling their cattle (which they frequently do), they incur a penalty of £5, and so become liable to the mercy of common informers, who (being intituled to one moiety of the said penalty) are very numerous, and often make it their business to lurk on the highways near such places where steep hills are, to take advantage where the wagon carriers are necessitated to make use of a seventh horse, and they frequently seize their horses, to the great prejudice and disappointment of the trading part of the kingdom and to the ruine of the wagoners and their families."[1]

In so far as hills were concerned, the carriers' grievance was remedied by permitting extra "horses and beasts," however obtained, to be used on steep gradients. Trustees of turnpike roads were empowered to allow additional draught animals to be employed on such hills

[1] "True and Deplorable Case of the Wagoners, etc."

as they thought necessary, and the justices at their quarter sessions could order and direct accordingly. One of the gradients so excepted was Puddle Hill, Bedfordshire. In 1768 the trustees of the tollgate there, finding that it was impracticable for wagons carrying the weights allowed by law to be drawn up the hill by the usual number of horses, ordered that wagons with 9in. wheels might be drawn up the hill with any number of horses not exceeding ten, and wagons with wheels of any less breadth with any number of horses not exceeding six.[1] But the informer's occupation was by no means gone then; it survived till many years later.

A dark picture of the *canaille* was drawn little more than a century ago, when they seem to have practised blackmailing in addition to their other arts. They are represented by a Mr. J. Matthews, in a letter to Sir John Sinclair, chairman of the Committee for Revising the General Turnpike Act, as hanging about lanes leading to turnpike roads, taking the name of a farmer who was not committing, and had not committed, any offence, laying an information, and then stopping dead before the notice of trial. By these tactics the farmer, who had meanwhile prepared his defence, sustained a loss of about £20, or £15 more than a conviction would have cost him. Naturally, he related the circumstance

[1] "Bedfordshire County Records," i. 40.

to his neighbours, who, when threatened in turn, compounded with the informer by handing him a few guineas at once; "and thus contributions" were "levied on the highway as effectively" as, "and not more innocently than, if" they had been "collected under the terror of the pistol."[1] Some of the men who robbed farmers in this way were, it was said, agents of the "very lowest class of London attornies."

In the end, after all the retrograde legislation, the cost of attempting to enforce it, and the irritation to owners of vehicles, the object aimed at was achieved, not, however by adapting traffic to roads, but by adapting roads to traffic. It was Macadam who showed the way to real progress, and ultimately caused the Legislature to lay aside its antiquated weapons. Asked his opinion on the wheel controversy, he promptly replied that he would make a road anywhere which would bear broad and narrow wheels equally well; and he subsequently demonstrated that a highway made according to the principles associated with his name would carry any traffic in reason. The great problem was thus solved, and with the passing of the 5 and 6 William IV., c. 50, better known as the Highway Act of 1835, which, besides consolidating some previous laws, removed at one sweep all restrictions on traffic, peace was restored amid much rejoicing on the part of all owners of heavy vehicles.

[1] Reports of Committees on the Preservation of Highways, etc. (1806-11).

MET. BOROUGH OF PUBLIC

CHAPTER VIII.

The Evolution of Road-making.

It is strange that, though roads must have been nearly the first things made in Britain, road-making is one of the youngest of the sciences. With the Romans departed the practice of those principles of highway construction which they had introduced, and of which they left such splendid memorials; and it was only by slow, tedious, and costly steps that the knowledge of how to make roads suitable for the needs of the time was finally acquired.

If the Saxons learned anything from the Roman roads, they made little use of their gleanings; for their own common highways were merely tracks, and were repaired by throwing sticks into the holes and scattering thereon earth or stones or both. Just as simple was road-mending till Tudor times. A sixteenth century writer on husbandry[1] directs, "first and principally," that there be no water standing in the road needing amendment, but that it be "always currante and reunynge, nor have none abydynge more in one place than in an other. And in somer," the rural economist proceeds, "whan the water is dryed vp, than to get grauell and to fyllvp euery lowe place and to make theym

[1] A. Fitzherbert, "The Booke of Husbandry"

euen, somewhat dyscendynge or currante, one way or the other." After recommending that, if no gravel or stones be available, earth should be used at the beginning of summer, "that it may be well hardened with caryage and treading upon," he says that this would be well considered, "specially aboute London, whereas they make moche more coste than nedeth, for there they dyche their hyeways on bothe sides and fill vp the holowe and lowe places with earthe, and than they cast and laye grauell a hoste. And whan a greatte rayne or water commeth and synketh thorowe the grauell, and commeth to the earthe, than the earthe swelleth and bolneth, and waxeth softe, and with treadynge, and specially with caryage, the grauel synketh, and goeth downward as his natures kind requyreth, and than it is in maner of a quycke sande, that hard it is for anything to goo ouer."

While, however, this was the general mode of mending highways in the Tudor period, it was not the only one. There were others of a less primitive kind. This is clearly shown by an Act for the repair of a causeway between Bristol and Gloucester (1 Mary, c. 6), in which the road is ordered to be "well syded, pitched, and bottomed withe stones and other worckmanshippe, and guttered for avoiding of water."

After the institution of statute labour in 1555, stones were commonly used for amending high-

ways, and would have been more so had they been easily obtainable everywhere. There was "such want" of them in some places that the inhabitants were "driuen to seeke them farre off in other soiles," and even then they had to pay heavily for them, because the owners of the land, notwithstanding that they had formerly "giuen monie to haue them borne awaie," now raised "the same to excessive prices," whereby their neighbours were "driven to grieuous charges."[1]

The surface of roads was, nevertheless, usually soft, and so much so in some parts of the country, "as in Holland in Lincolne-shire and suchlike," that there were "dayly continuall great griefe and heartbreaking of man and beast, with charges, hindrances, wearing and tyring of them, and sometimes . . . great and imminent danger of their lives and often spoile and losse of goods."[2] A reformer proposed, therefore, that in such places the earth should be cast up "causy wise"; that on it should be placed a series of wooden frames, filled with "wood, stones, iron cinders, iron stones, grauel stones, or other," to form a pavement; and that such frames should, lastly, be covered over with small gravel, rubbish, sand, or broken stones.[3]

In many places, indeed, roads were so soft or "foundrous" as to be impassable, and travellers

[1] W. Harrison, Holinshed's "Chronicles" (1586), i. 114.
[2] T. Procter, "A Profitabl Worke to this Whole Kingdome."
[3] T. Procter, "A Profitable Worke to this Whole Knigdome."

were obliged to diverge to left or right and pass over the adjoining land; and through this "shifting and seeking the best way diversely" there were "great hurt and spoile of Fences and groundes, with riding and going over the Corne, and suchlike." For damage so caused farmers and others had no legal remedy, because it was a valid defence to a charge of trespass that the road was "foundrous."[2] Under the Tudor rulers people were actually encouraged, in a measure, to strike out new roads as fast as old ones became "worn out." An Act of 7 Henry VIII., passed to stimulate the amendment of highways in Sussex, empowered any person to lay out a new road on his own estate "for the common weal of the King's people," and to reimburse himself by adding the ground of the old road to his own lands. Sometimes, however, occupiers were compensated, as an act of grace, for losses they had sustained through wayfarers passing over their land. Thus, we find the justices at Thirsk reciting, in 1691, that "Robert Bulmer, of Morton Bridge, for several years by-past in the winter time hath had great loss in his groundes there, when the river was out, by people riding over it, it being otherwise impossible for travellers to pass," and ordering the treasurers to pay him 30s., "and for the future

[2] "The Laws Concerning Travelling" (1718), p. 61. After about 1780 the plea of imminent danger was less effective, and a not uncommon reason adduced for making a new road in a certain district was that the cost would be less than the amount of fines for trespasses.

20s. per annum on the account that he shall suffer persons in the winter time to pass peaceably through his grounds as formerly he hath done, and also place and erect stoops in his grounds for guides and marks for preserving passengers from going into the river of Swale."[1]

It was the necessity of making détours to avoid "foundrous" or submerged places that operated as much as anything else to give English roads their present tortuousness. Coming to such a spot, a wayfarer swerved on to the adjacent land, the next traveller followed in his trail, others did likewise, and so the diversion became a permanent part of the road, while the abandoned piece was enclosed. Many of these semi-circular sweeps were subsequently cut out; but thousands still needlessly lengthen our highway system.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century there were, it is to be inferred from an order promulgated by the justices of the Hundred of Derby, at Ormskirk, Lancashire, seekings after a higher standard of road-making. "Upon consideration of the great decay of the King's highways and the long neglects of the sufficient repaires thereof," the court, "resolving to make a thorrou reformation," directed that the roads "shall forthwith be put in perfect good repaire; that they be made so wide, so smoothed from little rockes, little hills, hollowes, slodds, and all

[1] "North Riding Records," vii. 119.

unevenness, freed from boggie, sinking, soft, deepe, or founderous places, rid of all sorts of rubbish, and so sufficiently passable throughout, that coaches, carts, and carriages may safely in all places . . . meet and pass each other; that all ditches which convey the water cross the highway be soughed with wallstone and well covered throughout, from one side of the lane to the other." This is an early official reference to the little streams crossing the roads. Up to this time these had generally been left open, with the natural result that after heavy rains the highways were flooded.

The justices then made a curious provision respecting causeways. They ordered that "all calseys be made of the full bredth of one yard and a quarter, of round stones, and not of flags, and that [at] all places where calseys are of flags," if round stones may be had at a reasonable charge, "the flagged calseys be pulled up, and new calseys with round stones made in the place, or such other place of the lane as may be more convenient."[1] By "round stones" the justices meant the "petrified kidneys" of popular terminology. These abominations found favour with highway authorities in many parts of Lancashire and Cheshire. Defoe noticed them at Wigan in the early part of the eighteenth century. "We are now," he says, "in a country

[1] 14th Report Com. His. MSS., App. iv., p. 193.

where the roads are paved with small pebbles, so that we both walk and ride upon this pavement, which is generally about a yard and a half broad." The "roads" were the causeways; for Defoe adds that the "middle road, where the carriages are obliged to go, is very bad."[2]

With the advent of the turnpike trusts came further developments in road-making. Some of these bodies laid out double roads, a "summer road" and a "winter road." The one was a grassy strip for use in fine weather, and the other, which was on the same plane, nominally "hard"; and the object of maintaining the parallel ways was that the winter road might, for the sake of economy, be spared as much as possible. The turnpike between Derby and Alfreton consisted of duplex roads, and a section of the Fosse, that running in a direct line between Moreton-in-the-Marsh and Cirencester, was divided in the same manner.

Still more striking an innovation by the trusts was the "barrel" form of highway. Roads were gradually rounded transversely, till at last some of those not more than 20ft. wide rose from side to middle as much as 18in. Since the only place where a vehicle could stand upright on such a road was in the middle, deep ruts were soon formed, and the wheels, by pressing against the sides, forced much of the materials into the

[2] Defoe's "Tour," iii. 248.

ditches, whence it was again cast on the road. This was so usual a practice that a plough was invented to "throw up roads." It was tried on the Ipswich Road in 1775, and, according to an annalist,[1] "answered beyond expectation." In a given time, he stated, it would do more work than fifty men. On wheeled traffic the effects of the exaggerated convexity were still more serious. Many horses were ruined by strain in the fetlock joint, and both coaches and wagons were frequently overturned. Sometimes a wagon, catching fire through the upsetting of a lamp, was utterly destroyed.

To make and maintain the "hard" road the trusts had recourse to many methods. The simplest was that occasionally practised when the natural foundation was stone or gravel. Water, instead of being drained from the road, was forced to run along it lengthways, and in its passage bear off all the soil. This expedient was adopted on the Derby-Alfreton turnpike, the winter portion of which was in consequence lowered by several inches.[2] On clayey soil, a variant of the shift was sometimes put into operation, notably at Hinckley, where "a public-spirited gentleman went him-

[1] *Annual Register*, 1775, p. 122.

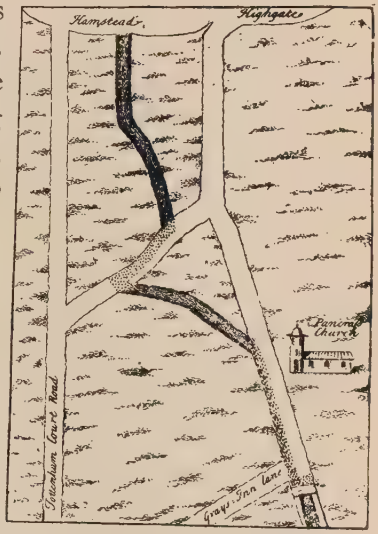
[2] Even whole towns were washed, though not, it would seem, solely with a view to improving the highways. Scott, the Quaker poet, says ("Digest of Highway and Turnpike Laws," p. 290) that on some roads the traveller must do penance by wading through dirty water to the knees. He then adds, in a note, that such is the case at Ware, to wash which town a body of water is let down several times a week. "This, though an intolerable nuisance to travellers, is regarded by some of the inhabitants as a peculiar and inestimable advantage; I suppose, because their fathers thought it so."

self, upon every great shower, to throw sand into the current, which was carried along and made an excellent path."[1]

The staunchest advocate of the washing method of road-making was Robert Phillips, who in 1737 published a little work on highways.[2] "They [the surveyors] make," he says, "the roads high to rise above the land and keep off the water, when they should make them low to bring on the water and wash them. They throw back the mud out of the ditches on to the roads, when they should carry it away and make room for more to be wash'd in from among the gravel." In proof of his contention, he instances the Hampstead and Highgate roads, of which he gives a curious diagram. It shows the stream from Hampstead flowing through a field, running down the side of a road, and ultimately extending right across it. Then, after meandering through another field, it enters the turnpike near St. Pancras Church, a short distance below which it again covers the whole road before it flows under a bridge on the way to the Fleet Ditch. Phillips's point is that where the water comes on the road "the way is good," the surface having been worn to the gravel. He contends that, therefore, the Hampstead and Highgate roads might be amended by bringing on their whole length the "water that runs to waste from Hampstead Road";

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, xix. 219.
[2] "A Dissertation concerning the Present State of the High Roads of England."

and he then insists that sufficient water might be had from the New River pipes to mend Islington Road and from the Chelsea pipes to mend Kensington Road. Yet where the stream extended right across the turnpike near St. Pancras Church the road had, according to his own statement, been washed away to a depth of 12ft. or 13ft.



An early view of the Hampstead and Highgate Roads.

Some trusts, on the other hand, were so anxious to get rid of water that they laid down a foundation of faggots to drain off the dirt from the surface when the rain fell. About 1735 Kilburn Road was thus treated, and a lane leading to Baldock, Herts.,[1] was similarly amended, with results which were temporarily satisfactory. "As long as there was any space or room among the bavins to receive the loam and the dirt,"

[1] This lane, commonly called "Baldock Lane," formed a section of the North Road, and in the early part of the eighteenth century was one of the most anathematised highways in England On reaching it, both coaches and horsemen swerved into the adjoining fields, and forced their way past the irate owners, who, finding it impossible to bar their passage, ultimately laid out tracks, put up gates, and placed men at them to collect a voluntary toll, which coach-owners and travellers on horseback gladly paid to avoid the execrable high road.

says Phillips, "the road was good; but when they were quite fill'd the stones went down, and the loam, spueing out at the top, made the road bad."

But in general the trusts laid and maintained their roads with gravel, and round London, in particular, enormous quantities of that material were used. In 1764 the Kensington Trust threw no fewer than 3,500 loads, costing £978, on the highway between Clarges Street, Piccadilly, and Knightsbridge, a distance of only three-quarters of a mile; and a surveyor then estimated that an equal weight of material would be required every year.[1] By the continuous and lavish use of gravel, indeed, some of the London trusts, during the period 1715-35, raised their roads 5ft., 6ft., 7ft., and in some places as much as 8ft. When Tyburn Road (now Oxford Street) was newly amended, it was 3ft. or 4ft. above the doorsteps of the houses along it.

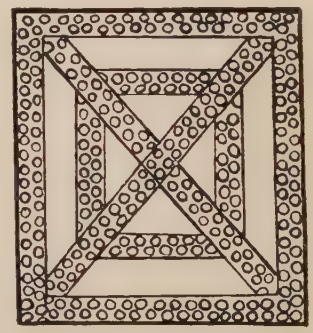


Diagram of a Proposed Paving. "A Profitable Worke to this Whole Kingdom."

Little was the advance in road-making, therefore, up to the latter part of the eighteenth century. Existing ways were maintained in a

[1] Journals of the House of Commons, xxx. 429.

costly and wasteful manner, and no less unsatisfactory were the methods of constructing new ways, which had all the faults of the others and some of their own in addition. The reason is plain. Engineers disdained such work, and,

John Metcalf. "Blind Jack of Knaresborough."

despite the example of Smeaton, who in 1768 constructed a road between Markham and Newark, refused to undertake it, while the men who were willing to enter upon it lacked precisely those qualifications for which it called.

Some of the best roads of this period were made in Lancashire and Yorkshire by native contractors, chief of whom was John Metcalf, better known as "Blind Jack of Knaresborough." This remarkable son of the soil had been many things before he turned road-maker. He had acted as guide to those who could see, and had also been by turns musician, soldier, chapman, fish dealer, horse dealer, and common carrier from Knaresborough to York, between which towns he had plied the first stage wagon ever run. The familiarity with northern roads he had acquired in these callings, coupled with his natural adaptiveness, served him in good stead in his new part of road-maker, enabling him as they did to construct in all nearly 200 miles of highway, for which he received about £65,000. After this crowning achievement he settled at Spofforth, near Knaresborough, where he died in 1810, and where a tombstone (erected by Lord Dundas) commemorates him.

If Metcalf's roads were not such as would now be called good, they seem to have been better than many which were made by other contractors about the same time. Besides constructing new channels of communication on lines laid out by turnpike trusts, Blind Jack actually surveyed and planned some roads; and never did he fail to avail himself of natural and other advantages. His remarkable acuteness was manifested in

making the turnpike between Knaresborough Bridge and Harrogate. While walking over some grassy land he stopped and ordered his men to try it for stone or gravel. Digging at the place indicated, they came upon an old causeway, from which was obtained a quantity of stone suitable for the undertaking. Another exploit connected with the same road shows that he realised the importance of a straight line. The shortest way lay over a bog, which the surveyor, in the belief that a road could not possibly be made over it, had skirted. Metcalf differed from him, and, on being told that if he could cross it he should be paid for the same length as if he had gone round, laid gorse and heather on the bog, and over this foundation continued the road. He subsequently followed the same method on Standish Common, and this portion of the Wakefield-Austerland turnpike needed no repairs for twelve years. Blind Jack's roads, in fact, must be accounted remarkable achievements.

The first engineer to break away from the traditions of his profession was Thomas Telford. As a young man he saw the unparalleled energy with which his compatriots applied themselves to converting the old horse tracks into regular roads, and himself, as a journeyman mason, worked on the bridges by which some of those roads were thrown over the mountain streams in his native Eskdale. On one of these structures,

that at Langholm, his bench mark is still to be seen. His experiences turned his thoughts to road-making, and long afterwards, under the provisions of a Parliamentary Commission of 1803, he constructed 875 miles of highway and 1,117 bridges in Scotland, subsequently reconstructing the greater part of the turnpike between Carlisle and Glasgow. In this work he used a pitch foundation resembling that which had long been in vogue in France, provided thorough drainage, and, instead of making the surface in the "barrel" form so common in his time, adopted a cross section of moderate curvature; and the result was, by general consent, the finest length of road then in existence.

Telford's Bench Mark on Langholm Bridge.

Telford set up a new standard in highway construction, and the value of his type of foundation was quickly recognised, though it was not, perhaps, fully demonstrated till about 1830. At that time the Highgate Archway road, which was about one mile in length, with a gradient at the worst point of 1 in 30, had for many years been a terror alike to its proprietors and to all who used it. Originally it was made by laying gravel and sand on the subsoil (sand, clay, and gravel), and covering this mixture with broken flints and gravel. The result being very unsatisfactory, a brushwood foundation was tried, again without

success. Tin cuttings were then spread over the whole bed to a depth of several inches; but this novel road material, instead of knitting together, as had been anticipated, proved so unstable that the road became an absolute horror to coach proprietors, who had already had more horses killed on it than on any other stretch of road of equal length in the whole country. Finally, under Telford's directions, a coating of Roman cement and gravel was laid on the road as a bed for the metal, and thus the problem was solved to the complete satisfaction of everybody. Before the improvement six horses were required to take a coach up the hill at a walking pace, whereas afterwards four could trot up it with the heaviest load.

Meanwhile, Telford's system had been eclipsed by that named after John Loudon Macadam. Telford preached good foundations. Macadam cared nothing for them, stating that excellent roads could be formed merely of thin layers of stones broken into angular pieces of nearly cubical shape, and weighing not more than 6ozs., and that such roads could be carried over bogs. This sounded like a foolish boast; but he actually threw a foundationless way over a morass between Bridgwater and Cross, and another one across a very soft peat bog by Wedmore and Glastonbury.

Macadam first put into practice the principles

he popularised[1] when appointed surveyor general of the Bristol district in 1815. No sooner was he installed in office than he limited the size of stones to be used with a meticulous preciseness which alternately amused and dismayed his subordinates. His first direction on the point was that the roadmen should pass no stone which they could not get into their mouth, though this was soon amended. Shortly after issuing it, while going over a turnpike, he came across some stones of extraordinary size, and angrily demanded an explanation, declaring that it was impossible that such stones could be got into any man's mouth. With a grunt of dissent, the stone-breaker opened his jaws, disclosing an enormous cavity wholly destitute of teeth! Realising then that the mouth was, after all, too variable a standard, Macadam promptly introduced a 2in. ring for testing stones, and, in addition, supplied his surveyors with a pair of scales and a 6oz. weight, that when they reached a heap of stones they might see whether the pieces were within the limit he had imposed. But, though the new system was plentifully ridiculed at the outset, there was a rapid change of opinion, and in a few years criticism was silenced.

[1] Contrary to popular belief, Macadam did not invent the method of road-making named after him. It had long been practised in Switzerland, Sweden, and other countries, and even in England it was not unknown before the Macadam era. By it Mr. Gabriel Stone, of Somerset Farm, near Axbridge, had made the road from Axminster to Hurtspit and beyond so smooth and firm that the stage-coachmen declared it to be too good, as it caused both them and their horses to be careless.

It was not until after 1820, however, that either Telford or Macadam had much influence on road-making and maintenance. When the highways in the Bristol district were undergoing metamorphosis not more than one mile of road in London was surfaced with granite. Gravel was, during part of the time, still used almost exclusively for repairs, and later some of the trusts in the metropolis and its environs, despairing of maintaining their roads in any other way, imported stones from Scotland and paved them. The same kind of roadway had become common in urban districts in the provinces, particularly in Lancashire and parts of the surrounding counties. As early as 1785 the road from Stockport to Manchester was paved, and throughout the cotton district and other industrial centres the highway was, soon after the dawn of the nineteenth century, usually a rough pavement formed either of rounded stones known as "boulders" or of ill-shapen stones called "rubble" or "randoms." Local authorities believed that only such rough and uneven roads, which admittedly had no merit save durability, would bear the heavy traffic.

Rural turnpikes, like the London roads, were also, for the most part, still of gravel. The one at Virginia Water, part of the Western (Exeter) Road, was wholly of that material about 1820, when, in consequence of the great trouble and expense to which the trust had been put, the

mile-man system was introduced on it. This mode of highway maintenance, which was common in France, had been frequently advocated by English road reformers; but the highway at Virginia Water was the first on which it was put into operation in this country. A portion of the road, in no case more than a mile, was placed under the care of one man, who bore the number of his section on his hat, and whose shovel, pick-axe, etc., were numbered accordingly. It was his duty to go over his length at least once a day, summer and winter, that holes might be filled up and defects in general remedied as soon as possible. To spur him on, the spirit of competition was fostered by giving prizes to the men with the best-kept length of road. As the system was adopted by two neighbouring trusts, one of which controlled part of the Bath Road, it presumably worked well; but for some reason it never gained a wide acceptance.

Though gravel was the principal, it was not the only material used on roads. Staffordshire and Shropshire highways were mostly composed of large pebbles mixed with sand, and were, notwithstanding the large sums spent on them, nearly impassable. In Essex, Kent, and Surrey the native flints were thrown on the roads just as they were dug from the earth. Limestone was pressed into service for maintaining the lines of communication in the counties of

Gloucester, Somerset, and Wilts., and was laid down in unequal and unbroken masses. Roads were, therefore, always loose and unconsolidated even when they were not of gravel.

By 1823, however, the fame of Macadam's work in the Bristol district had spread throughout the whole country, and soon afterwards a fresh era in road-making opened everywhere. Rural trusts, some of them under the direction of Macadam, who ultimately had a staff of 300 sub-surveyors, began to metal their lines, and then the question arose whether the new system could not be used to displace the pavements in large towns. Macadam himself had no doubt on the point. Writing to the President of the Board of Agriculture, he declared that the "measure of substituting pavements for convenient and useful roads is a kind of desperate remedy to which ignorance has had resource. The badness or scarcity of materials," he added, "cannot be considered a reasonable excuse, because the same quantity of stone required for paving is fully sufficient to make an excellent road anywhere, and it must be evident that road materials of the best quality may be procured at less cost than paving stones."[1] These views were endorsed by a committee of the House of Commons, and thereupon the fate of the existing pavements was sealed. Those in London were broken into

[1] "Remarks on the Present System of Road-making."

fragments and scattered over the soil to form roads, a pavement from Edinburgh to Leith was similarly treated, and stone ways in other cities also perished before the new-born zeal of reformers. Simultaneously the principal lines of communication were metalled. Nearly all Eng-

Here lies John Metcalf: one whose infant sight
Felt the dark pressure of an endless night:
Yet such the fervour of his dauntless mind,
His limbs full strung, his spirit unconfin'd,
That long ere yet life's bolder years began.
His sightless efforts mark'd th'aspiring man.
Nor mark'd in vain: High deeds his manhood dard
And commerce, travel, both his ardour shar'd:
'Twas his a guide's unerring aid to lend:
O'er trackless wastes to bid new roads extend:
And when Rebellion rear'd her giant size
'Twas his to burn with patriot enterprize
For parting wife and babes one pang to feel
Then welcome danger for his country's weal.
Reader! like him exert thy utmost talent giv'n
Reader! like him adore the bounteous hand of Heav'n
He died on the 26th of April, 1810.
in the 93d year of his age.

Blind Jack's Epitaph.

land, in fact, was macadamised, and then for the first time our roads were suitable for the traffic they were required to bear.

The enthusiasm for the new system did not last long. Towns which had hastened to break up their pavements soon re-adopted them, and the steam roller tended still further to hasten the reaction. The ponderous "planifier," as an

ingenious gentleman called it, made its *début* in London in 1867, and was hailed as a great novelty, though as a fact "rolling machines" were invented centuries before, one of the earliest patents taken out in connection with highways having as its subject a machine which, among other things, acted as a roller. After the steam roller had been worked for some time, it was found that it was more effective when some earthy matter was used as binding material, and consequently the present practice was introduced, with the result that roads became less satisfactory. Nothing else should have been expected, because Macadam had repeatedly denounced top-dressing, and had insisted that roads should be made of broken stones only. But his system nevertheless became discredited.

Among the many attempts which have since been made to improve on it was that of studding road metal with iron. The iron was cast in the form of cubes about 1in. square. When the road became consolidated holes were picked in it, a single cube was sunk in each to such a depth that the top was level with the surface, and the surrounding space was then filled up with stone chips, which were beaten in with a mallet. As one cube was placed in every inch of road, the effect was practically the formation of an iron pavement. This curious system, which was invented by MacNeill, was tried in London, a

portion of Blackfriars Road being laid with the iron cubes, and subsequently, in March, 1835, it was applied on a part of the London-Birmingham section of the Holyhead Road. For some reason, however, it never became popular.

The failure of this and other methods of road-making, coupled with the present state of our highway system, amply vindicate the main proposition that Macadam laid down. Though experience has not borne out the claim that a road made of thin layers of broken stone will bear the heaviest traffic, and though the merits of the lesser-known system associated with the name of Telford are universally recognised by engineers, the method that Macadam introduced into this country has been proved to be superior to every other as a mere road covering and to give a surface free from dust, except that caused by actual wear.

If, however, the scientific vote has been cast in favour of a more durable mode of road-making, such as that adopted by Telford on the west coast road to Scotland, we must not forget that Macadam regenerated our highways, and rendered to the community services which were none too liberally rewarded with the £10,000, or, deducting an indemnity of £8,000 for past outlay, £2,000, voted to him by the Government.

MET. BOROUGH OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

CHAPTER IX.

Highway Administration and Control.

Much as road-making has taxed the ingenuity and skill of the nation, highway administration has proved a still more difficult problem. The Acts relating to it are to be counted by the thousand, and in complexity and length bewilder the modern student, who becomes lost in their labyrinthine mazes. When, however, he has found a way through them, he emerges with two prime facts: First, that they consist of a long series of attempts to make parishes carry out certain obligations; second, that they show a marvellous power of resistance on the part of those bodies.

The conflict between Parliament and parishes was started by an Act of Philip and Mary. From the Norman Conquest to the Tudor period there had been no legal liability on anybody to repair the roads. In the reign of Henry VIII. a series of Acts was passed authorising landowners to amend local highways, most of them near London; but these statutes were of a permissive rather than compulsory character, and it was not until 1555 that the first General Highway Act (2 and 3 Philip and Mary, c. 8) was passed. The main provision of this measure, on which the present

law is based, was that the inhabitants of every parish should, on four days in the year of eight hours a day, apply themselves to the "amendment of the highways leading to any market town," under the superintendence of two of their number, who were to be appointed surveyors for one year, and held responsible for the state of the roads. Parishioners were enjoined to work in person or by deputy on the four days, and occupiers of land ordered to furnish one cart for each plough land (subsequently defined as woodland or other land worth £50 per annum) they held, while persons keeping wains of draught were also to furnish such aid. Penalties were prescribed for default by individuals or parishes. The Act was to be in force for seven years.

Though this statute was allowed to expire, it was renewed again and again, and at last, by the 29 Elizabeth, c. 5, made perpetual. It did not, however, stand amended for long. The number of days' labour was increased from four to six, and several loopholes were filled up.

Meanwhile, the attention of Parliament had been drawn to the hardships arising from exceptional traffic in parishes or districts which were centres of industry, and relief had been granted to aggrieved parishioners by requiring the persons who caused the special wear and tear of the roads to render extra help in maintaining them. The 27 Elizabeth, c. 19, provided that occupiers

of ironworks carrying or causing to be carried "any coales, mine, or yron" to or from their works between October 12th and May 1st should also carry or cause to be carried and laid for every six loads of coal or mine and for every ton of iron "by the space of one mile thorowe any high ways being under any [of] the Hilles commonly called the North Downes of Surrye and Kent" one cart load of cinder, gravel, stone, sand, or chalk suitable for the amending of the said highways, or pay 2s. 6d. in lieu of each load of material due from them. The title of the Act mentions the "Wildes of the Counties of Sussex, Surrey, and Kent"; but in the enacting portion Sussex, at this time an important centre of the iron industry, is omitted, doubtless through inadvertence, and Sussex ironmasters continued to be exempt, therefore, from any special liability for the maintenance of the roads.

By the 39 Elizabeth, c. 19, however, ironmasters in all three counties were ordered to pay to a justice of the peace a highway rate of 3s. for every three cartloads of coal or other mineral and for every ton of iron conveyed a distance of one mile along any road in Sussex, Surrey, or Kent, between October 12th and May 1st, and were, in addition, required to make special contributions to the roads, in proportion to their traffic, during the summer months also. Southern owners of ironworks were, therefore, heavily taxed

for the use of the highways. But, although, as may be supposed, they complained of the injustice, they were not put on an equality with other manufacturers till 1767, when the onerous statute of Elizabeth was repealed by the 7 George III., c. 42.

Fair and just as the Act of 1555 seemed, except in so far as it affected parishes where the traffic was extraordinary, its provisions were carried out with great laxity from the first. Surveyors soon came under the lash of reformers. "Spiritless, ignorant, lazy, sauntering people," Burn[1] called those officers at a later period; and certainly they displayed little energy in carrying out the intentions of the Legislature. Farmers who held office found, as a rule, that the ways to their own holdings were in most need of amendment; shopkeepers honoured in like manner hesitated to enforce the law, lest they offend customers; and weak men could not bring themselves to "oppress" a neighbour, particularly when he could be counted on for a bowl of punch. There was another circumstance which militated against the effective administration of the Act. Surveyors of all grades and temperaments, conscious that the authority in which they were dressed was indeed brief, generally deemed it politic to make things easy all round, that things might be made easy for them in turn.

[1] "History of the Poor Laws" (1764), p. 239.

As a necessary consequence, parishioners commonly failed to fulfil their obligations. The rich and well-to-do, who should have compounded for their labour, "partly," as Harrison says, "cancelled their portions," and the "common people," profiting from the example set them, so loitered "in their labours that of all the six, scarcely two good days work were well performed."[1] The time appointed for mending the roads was generally looked upon as a holiday, and spent, in the main, accordingly, much to the profit of the village alehouse keeper.[2]

Machinery for enforcing the Act was soon set in motion. Notwithstanding the jobbery of surveyors as a class, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of parishioners were haled up at the sessions for refusing to perform their share of work on the roads. In contemporary records there are numerous entries similar to one in the papers of Helmesley Quarter Sessions, July, 1618, when, it is set forth, eleven persons of Dalton-in-Topcliffe were presented for "not leadinge, each of them, fower waine loads of cobble stones for amending of the high waie in the said parish called Broken Bankes."[3] Conviction usually resulted from presentment; but the matter did not always end there, as we gather from a petition

[1] W. Harrison, Holinshed's "Chronicles" (1586), i. 114.

[2] The accounts of the parish of St. Thomas, Winchester, show that beer was supplied to those who worked on the highways. Finally, however, there is this entry: "No beer has been given to the workmen these two years, neither is it ever to be allowed again." See *Hampshire Notes and Queries*, iv. 9.

[3] "North Riding Records," ii. 171.

of the year 1649 to the sessions at Derby. In it an inhabitant of Beardsall protests against being fined for neglecting to do his statute labour. After denying that he has been remiss, he says that he was fined "by the instigation of some neighbours not well disposed towards your petitioner (and, as your petitioner is informed, it was an Alehouse plot)."[1]

We find, too, many parishes presented for the "foundrous" state of their highways. The form is shown by a presentment made at the Easter Sessions, Derby, in 1656:

> The presentment of John Spateman, Esq., one of ye Justices of peace of this County of Derby, ye 15th day of Aprill, 1656, upon his own veiw.
>
> I present the Inhabitants of ye Parish of Chesterfeild for not repayring of ye highwayes leading betwixt Wingerworth and ye towne of Chesterfeild, and being within ye sayd parish.[2]

Some road reformers, indeed, specially exerted themselves in bringing parishes to task, and courts recognised the trouble and expense to which they were put thereby. One of these benefactors to the community was James Calvert, of Swaineby, who, at Helmesley Sessions in 1661-2, was said to have done the North Riding "very good service in presenting the decays in common highways," and was ordered to be paid "40s. towards his pains and charges in attending sessions and presenting the said highways."[3]

[1] J. C. Cox, "Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals," ii. 227. [2] Ibid., ii. 228.
[3] "North Riding Records," vi. 50.

After a faulty road was presented it was, as a rule, promptly amended. But, though numerous roads were brought to the notice of sessions in the early part of the seventeenth century, highways in general were no better during the Commonwealth than they had been in the reign of Philip and Mary.

The Government of the Restoration consequently applied itself to altering the existing law of highways, and not only founded the turnpike system, but passed two Acts (14 Charles II., c. 6, and 22 Charles II., c. 12) establishing several new principles. By the most important provision the surveyor was empowered to raise an assessment not exceeding sixpence in the pound if the statute labour should prove insufficient, and with the money so obtained to pay those liable to perform such labour for overwork. In this particular the statutes were clearly suggested by an ordinance of 1645, though Cromwell and his council, mindful of how they had suffered in their campaigns through bad roads, had boldly abolished compulsory labour.

To the same end, Charles II. issued a number of proclamations, most of which enforce existing laws on pain of the King's displeasure and of such penalties as may be imposed by statute. One of such edicts, however, is curious as showing that the zeal of the Legislature in road reform outran its discretion. It relates to

a section of an Act of 1662 prohibiting the use for certain purposes of any vehicle with wheel tires less than 4in. wide, and suspends such section on the ground that in many places "the Rutts cannot receive such Wheels, nor

By the King.

A PROCLAMATION

For suſpending the proſecution upon that part of the late Act of Parliament for Enlarging and Repairing of Common High-ways, as concerneth the breadth of the Tyres of Wheels

CHARLES R.

Whereas by the Act of this preſent parliament, for Enlarging and Repairing of Common high-ways, It is amongſt other things Enacted, That no Waggon, Wayn, Cart, or Carriage ſhall be imployed for the uſes therein mentioned, the Wheels whereof are leſs then four Inches in the Tyre, upon the penalties by the ſaid Act in that behalf provided, whereupon complaints and repreſentations have been made to his Majeſty, and his Privy Council, from the Lord Mayor of the City of London, and from divers parts of the Country, That many inconveniencies are like to enſue, if that part of the ſaid Act ſhall be urged to be obſerved, or put in execution, concerning breadth of Wheels, by reaſon in many places the Rutts cannot receive ſuch Wheels, nor Carriages paſs, eſpecially in the winter ſeaſon now approaching, and in narrow paſſages, and in reſpect alſo of the difficulty and charge (if not impoſſibility) of providing materials for new Wheels, and Waggons and Carts anſwerable to them at once univerſally over the Nation, by which means Commerce and Intercourſe will be much obſtructed, the City of London, and other places deprived of neceſſary ſupplies of proviſions, and the Country diſabled to vend and utter their Goods and Manufactures: His Majeſty hath therefore thought fit, by and with the Advice of his Privy Council, to Order and Declare, and doth hereby ſtrictly Charge and Command, That all proſecutions upon that Clauſe of the ſaid Act, concerning the breadth of the Tyre of Wheels, ſhall be ſuſpended and forborn until the Parliament re-aſſemble, and take further Order; And that in the mean time, no Miſdemeſts ſhall be taken, or other proceedings had for that Offence, and that the Horſes and Goods therefore already ſeiſed, taken or diſtrained, ſhall be forthwith diſcharged and reſtored, without charge to the Owners. Provided that this Proclamation ſhall not be taken, nor is intended to ſuſpend the proſecution on any other parts of the ſaid Act, other then concerning the breadth of the Tyre of Wheels only, neither ſhall continue longer then until the Parliament upon conſideration thereof ſhall take further Order.

Given at Our Court at *Whitehall* the 14th day of *October*, 1662. in the Fourteenth year of Our reign

God ſave the King.

Carriages pass, especially in the winter season now approaching, and in narrow passages," and also because "of the difficulty and charge (if not impossibility) of providing materials for new Wheels and Wagons and Carts answerable to them at once universally over the Nation, by which means Commerce and Intercourse will be

much obstructed, the City of London and other places deprived of necessary supplies of Provisions, and the Country disabled to vend and utter their Goods and Manufactures."

In 1691 was effected a reform still more drastic than that carried out before the Revolution. Wearying of the struggle with parishes, Parliament took from them the power of selecting surveyors and transferred it to the justices, who were further authorised to levy at their discretion the rate to supplement statute labour. The parish was thus deprived of the control of its highways without being relieved of the liability to be presented for failing to keep them in repair, and there was also left to it the peril of being subjected to a heavy fine for neglect in that particular.

That the justices exercised the power to levy a rate where boon labour[1] was insufficient is illustrated by an entry in the Orders of the Quarter Sessions for the County of Derby for Easter, 1713. It runs:

Whereas the inhabitants of Ashborne, in this County, have made it appear to this Court that they have already done their six days work apeice towards the repairing of their High waies (pursuant to the Act of Parliamt in that case made & provided), and it proveing insufficient to amend the same, This Court doth order & it is hereby ordered that the sum of sixpence in the pound be raised by assessmt for & towards the repairing & amending thereof.[2]

[1] Long as it is since boon labour was called for to amend the highways, "booned," "booning," etc., have not yet dropped out of currency in this connection. A "booned" road in some parts of Lincolnshire, for instance, means one made of stone or some similar material, and repairing such a road is, among the older labourers, "booning," as it was when nothing was paid for the work.

[2] J. C. Cox, "Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals," ii. 230-3

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Sometimes, however, little of the proceeds of a rate was actually spent on the roads. At Bingley, in the West Riding, the surveyor's account which was presented on March 2nd, 1710, showed that that officer had disbursed in repairing the highways in two years only £1 12s. 10d. There remained a balance of £3 11s. 3d., £3 of which was ordered to be paid to a certain doctor for amputating and curing the leg of one Christopher Colton. How Colton injured his leg is not recorded; but possibly the accident was a consequence of the small expenditure on repairing the roads, and it may be that the local rulers came to the conclusion that the cost of amending the limb might, therefore, fittingly be made a charge on the highways fund.[1]

But, despite the enactment of 1691, statute labour did not become any more palatable to the community. On the contrary, it became less so; for with the increase in wheeled traffic grew a sense of injustice that a journeyman baker, a cobbler, or a day labourer should be compelled to contribute as much towards the upkeep of parochial roads as a duke who did not hold any plough lands.

This was doubtless a real grievance, and one never contemplated by the framers of the first General Highways Act. From the wording of that statute, it is clear that the intention of the

[1] H. Speight, "Chronicles and Stories of Old Bingley," 86.

Legislature was that every person should contribute to the maintenance of the roads in proportion to his or her use of them. But, as there were very few coaches or carriages in the reign of Philip and Mary, those vehicles were not specifically mentioned, and later statutes did not repair the omission. Many owners of coaches and carriages were, therefore, liable for the upkeep of the roads precisely to the same extent as the labourers past whom they rolled, notwithstanding that they obviously made far greater use of the highways. "As the law now stands," wrote Hawkins in 1763, "a nobleman of the highest rank that does not occupy £50 a year in land or keep a team (and there are many who do neither), and who is continually wearing the highway with his horses and his carriages, is legally chargeable with six days' labour in a year or the payment of 9s. in lieu thereof, and the poor day labourer, the cottager . . . whose only use of the public highway is the walking on it to and from his daily labour, is chargeable precisely to the same amount."[1]

In pointing out this anomaly, a surveyor shows that it tended to defeat the objects of the Legislature by making men like himself sympathise with the poor. "I cannot blame," he says in an address to young surveyors, "the Practice of some Surveyors . . . especially those that live

[1] "Observations on the State of the Highways."

in Corporate and Market Towns where the poor abound, in admitting the Children of Poor Cottagers and Labourers, in lieu of their Parents, to Labour the Six Days in gathering Stones for the repair of the Highways, and in Conniving at the Absence of other Poor Cottagers that have no Children to send or in taking but a little Money of them for their defect. For the utmost of Justice, in this case, would be Injustice and Oppression."[1]

The law was, in fact, as the records of courts leet and of sessions attest, more generally evaded than it had ever been. Thousands of parishioners refused to fulfil their statutory obligations, and the work that was done on the roads by those who professed to be more law-abiding was meagre and bad. "In a journey from London to Bath," says a traveller, "I saw between Marlborough and Froxfield a team of three horses, worth £60, dragging only half-a-bushel of gravel for a load, and I was informed by the driver that the dragging eight of these loads about 200 yards was esteemed a statute day's work for a plough land."[2]

Towards the end of the eighteenth century public feeling in regard to highway administration was further exacerbated by the stopping of many ancient roads. Till 1773 such a road could not be diverted without the King's licence, which

[1] W. Mathe . "Repairing and Mending of the Highways" (1696), 20.
[2] *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxiv. 395.

was not granted except through a jury of the district under a writ of *Ad quod clamnum*. But an Act which came into force in that year, by placing the power in the hands of the justices, abolished the old safeguards, and provided a much easier method whereby landlords might improve the amenity of their estates. They jumped at the chance. In Bedfordshire alone scores of roads were stopped, and the justices of that county frequently gave certificates similar to one signed on September 23rd, 1777. This document, after reciting that a new highway and footpath leading from Warren Gate to Southill Church Street, in the hundred of Wixamtree, and running through the lands of Viscount Torrington for the length of 1,826 yards or thereabouts, is completed and put in good repair, states that the old highway lying between and leading from Warren Gate to Southill Church, for the length of 1,760 yards or thereabouts, and portions of two footpaths, "may be stopped up by Viscount Torrington, and held by him, his heirs, and assigns, in lieu of the new roads and footpaths formed in and running through his lands."[1]

In many cases the results were deplorable. Old highways of real service to the community were supplanted by new ones that nobody wanted, and ultimately public rights were further violated by turning and lengthening main roads.

[1] "Bedfordshire County Records," i. 48.

A "slight, but nevertheless criminal, diversion" was made in the Brighton-Chichester road,[1] though this was trifling in comparison with some of the "improvements" effected in other parts of the country. Paterson notes one between Coventry and Coleshill. "Lord Aylesford," he warns the traveller, "having turned the road which used to go by Packington through his park, it is now twelve miles from Coventry to Coleshill, instead of eleven, as formerly."

The public, therefore, had an additional reason for not doing their share of work on the roads, which suffered in consequence. Whether feeling ran particularly high in Bedfordshire or not, we see the justices imposing heavy penalties on parishes a few years after the wholesale road-stopping took place. In one day Great Barford was fined £300, Dunton £270, and Flitton £250 for neglecting to repair highways.[2]

If, further, there was more care for communication in other parts of the country, the standard of road maintenance in general, so far as it was controlled by parishes, was certainly very low. Almost farcical was the usual procedure. When a common highway became dangerous or impassable, it was presented, whereupon all kinds of material—clods, rushes, soil, stones, sticks, etc.—were cast on it promiscuously, and roughly raked together so that the surface

[1] "The improvements of the Public Roads."
[2] "Bedfordshire County Records," i. 138-9.

from side to side approached a semi-circle. It was then "finished" by surmounting it with stones from old footpaths and a small quantity of gravel. Two justices, when on their way to sessions about 1809, inspected a road which had been thus amended, and certified that it was "perfectly smooth when they saw it, and that a great deal had been done since the last time they were there." On this report, the court pronounced the road perfectly satisfactory.[1]

But for a conspectus of the general attitude towards statute labour at this period we need only turn to the observations of a shrewd critic: "There is no trick, evasion, or idleness that shall be deemed too mean to avoid working on the road. Sometimes the worst horses are sent, at others a broken cart, or a boy, or an old man past labour to fill; they are sometimes sent an hour or two too late in the morning, or they leave off much sooner than the proper time, unless the surveyor watch the whole day."[2]

Nevertheless, statute labour lingered on till 1823, when, after an eventful existence of three centuries, it was abolished, and for it was substituted the provision Cromwell and his council had made 180 years before, a rate to be levied by the surveyors upon the property of the parishioners. Parliament thus swept away an old evil; but in the operation it unwittingly facilitated the

[1] Third Report of Committee on the Preservation of Highways (1809).
[2] Archdeacon Plymley, "General View of the Agriculture of Shropshire."

practice of playing with money raised for the maintenance of highways. Before, some of such money had been applied to the relief of the poor; now, such a diversion became common. When a man applied to the overseers for relief he was usually sent to the surveyor to be employed by him. Then, after being bandied to and fro till he was sick at heart, he was set to work on the roads or in the parish gravel pit, generally at a

Diagram of a Parochial Road after Amendment (about 1810). The dark portion represents the highway before it was repaired, and the light portion the material added.

rate of remuneration very nicely adjusted to the number of his children. He was, as a rule, given lower pay than an independent workman; but at Eastbourne the paupers received 16s. per week, or 4s. more than the regular labourers, whose wives naturally complained in consequence, declaring that their husbands, by not straightway becoming paupers, were shamefully neglecting the opportunities which providence had thrown in their way. This practice, however, was so costly and unsatisfactory that it was soon abandoned.

Parliament in 1835 made another experiment, consequent upon the roads improving very little from the labour of the old and feeble, the blind and maimed, and others who should have been chargeable to the poor rate. Besides depriving the justice of his right of presenting faulty highways, it took from the body of which he formed a member all authority over highway administration, and restored to the parish the power of electing its own surveyor that it had lost in the reign of William III.

The court leet, however, still retained jurisdiction over highways in places where it was held. It had frequently amerced persons for neglect of them, and, though its powers had gradually waned, it went on punishing those who were presented in connection with highways. In fact, at Ashton-under-Lyne the court continues to the present time "not only to be held, but actually to exercise local government functions. . . . What is, perhaps, more remarkable is that the proceedings are still fully effective. The persons presented pay the fines imposed and remedy the nuisances complained of."[1] As these "persons" include such bodies as the town council of Manchester, the municipal corporation, district councils, and railway companies, it is indeed remarkable that the Ashton-under-Lyne court should still survive in full vigour and efficiency.

[1] S. and B. Webb, "English Local Government," i. 115.

One of the worst consequences of the reactionary legislation of 1835 was that it facilitated the misapplication of highway funds. Before the passing of the Act it was not difficult, as we have seen, to divert money from the roads to the relief of the poor; but subsequently the operation was still less so, or, in fact, to debit the highway rate with any charge that would not bear much, if any, scrutiny. In 1840 a Royal Commission reported that money which should have been spent on the highways had been devoted to other purposes, and also pointed out the principal cause. "The abuse in the management of these parochial funds," it stated, "has partly arisen from their application in aid of the poor rate, and the generally deficient administration in this branch of local economy may be traced principally to the appointment of waywardens inefficient for the superintendence of the repair of the roads, the temporary duration of the compulsory office, and their narrow and confined sphere of action."[1] But, as the commission indicate, it was not only in relieving the poor rate that malversation occurred. We are told of a "church rate being paid, of overseers and vestry clerks receiving salaries, of a poor law guardian being provided," and of an illegitimate child being maintained out of the funds collected for the repair of the roads.[2]

[1] Report of Royal Commission on the Present Condition of Roads in England and Wales (1840).
[2] *Edinburgh Review*, cxix. 364.

The worst feature of the Act of 1835, however, was that it revivified the parochial principle. Notwithstanding that from the reign of Elizabeth the costliness and inadequacy of maintaining highways by the existing system had been daily apparent, the Legislature not merely retained the essential parts of that system, but gave the parish greater control over its highways than it had ever had before.

Twenty-seven years later this evil was again left unremedied, despite the attack on it made by some members of Parliament. During a debate in the House of Commons a speaker mentioned a road which, though leading from a country town to a railway station, passed in only seven miles through no fewer than seven jurisdictions, the limits of each of which were marked by a change in the condition of the road. The Highway District Act of 1862, passed to authorise the formation of district highway boards, was certainly intended to abolish such anomalies, as well as to effect economies in road government. But this statute did not materially affect the parochial principle. By the introduction in 1889 of the present mode of highway administration, moreover, that principle was given a further lease of life, and as a result there are now about 2,000 bodies with jurisdiction over our roads.

In the main, therefore, highway legislation has been directed to forcing parishes to carry

out duties which they were unable or unwilling adequately to perform; and it is remarkable that Parliament did not long since abandon so palpably hopeless a task and try a new policy in road government.

CHAPTER X.

The Turnpike System: Its Origin and Development.

While the Legislature was imposing the early restrictions on traffic it was asked to sanction the making of another experiment in highway administration, and in consequence it authorised the application to a main road of a principle which had been adopted centuries earlier at entrances to towns. This was taxing travellers directly for the right of passage, and devoting the proceeds to the upkeep of the highway.

The scene of the innovation was the old North Road, whence had come the cry against heavy carriages. By 1625 the parishes along the Hertfordshire portion of that ancient way, realising that the suppression of vehicular traffic would not materially lighten their obligations, began agitating for power to levy a toll upon carts. Sir John Croke and Sir John Davy, Justices of Assize for Hertfordshire, stated that the noblemen and gentlemen of Essex had levied a tax upon the inhabitants of the county for the repair of the highways, and requested a toll upon carts, which chiefly caused the decay of the roads, and they added that the people of Hertfordshire, having spent "great sums" on the roads, desired a

similar toll on carts.[1] The prayer was not immediately granted; but in 1663 an Act was passed authorising the justices of Hertford, Cambridge, and Huntingdon to collect tolls from passengers and vehicles at Wade's Mill, Caxton, and Stilton, the money to be applied to putting the road into a thorough state of repair. This was regarded by the Legislature as a temporary expedient, the term specified being eleven years; but the statute, though allowed to lapse after the prescribed period, was renewed again and again.

So easy a method of throwing parochial burdens on the shoulders of travellers must have aroused envy in many other parts of the country through which trunk roads run. Yet thirty-two years elapsed before its adoption was permitted elsewhere. It was not till the last decade of the seventeenth century that the next Act similar to that of 1663 was passed, and then Parliament not only granted power to collect tolls on the roads from London to Harwich, Attleborough to Wymondham, Reigate to Crawley, and Birdlip to Gloucester, but authorised the setting up of obstructions on such roads to prevent people from using them without paying. This was a new concession. In the Act relating to the old North Road no mention had been made of barriers; but the Legislature now sanctioned the erection of a "turnpike or gate." "Turn-

[1] State Papers (Dom.), 1623-25, p. 505.

pike" probably meant a pole or bar pivoted on a post. It gave its name, at all events, to the whole system of highway maintenance by means of tolls, as well as to a particular kind of road, that with a "hogged" or convex surface, which was adopted by the trustees in whom the management of turnpiked highways was vested.

The Act for amending the Birdlip-Gloucester road established another precedent. In previous cases where the collection of tolls on highways had been sanctioned surveyors had been empowered to obtain forced labour. They could compel carts and persons legally liable to boon service to assist in repairing the turnpiked highways at the usual rates of the county, but could not force any such person to travel more than four miles, work more than two days a week, or at all at seed time, hay time, or the corn harvest. Far more sweeping was the Act for repairing the road from Birdlip to Gloucester. All limitations of this kind were omitted, and the surveyors were given power to employ forced labour to an indefinite extent. In succeeding Acts, however, the original limitations were re-imposed.

Under Queen Anne other roads, each of which was described as a channel of traffic so great as to render it impossible for the adjacent parishes to repair it, were turnpiked, and with one of such roads, that between Fornhill and Stony

Stratford, described as "Watling Street Road," part of the "Common Post Road towards Ireland," began the practice of withdrawing turnpike roads from the control of parochial authorities and placing them in charge of trustees. But the system did not become thoroughly established till the latter half of the eighteenth century, when parishes in all parts of the country were relieved of the charge of the principal lines of communication. No later than the year 1770 there were in existence more than 530 turnpike Acts, many of which related to the chief trunk lines of the kingdom. Such was the activity in road improvement about this time, indeed, that in four years (from 1760 to 1764) more than 450 Acts were passed authorising alterations in or additions to our highways.

Great was the storm of indignation roused by the rapid spread of the system. Political economists denounced it, declaring that a tax on traffic was monstrous. Rural dwellers complained that turnpike roads increased the cost of living, as, in fact, they did locally, because they enabled the farmers to take their produce to the best markets, instead of selling it at home for what it would fetch. Arthur Young saw this clearly enough. "I found," he says, "all the sensible people attributed the dearness of their country to turnpike roads; and reason speaks

Table
of the
PRICE of POSTING,
Shewing the Charge to be made
for a
Pair of Horses,

Miles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
6	6 0	6 6	7 0	7 0	7 0	8 0	8 0	9 0	9 0	10 6				
7	7 0	7 7	8 2	8 9	9 4	9 11	10 6	12 3						
8	8 0	8 8	9 4	10 0	10 8	11 4	12 0	14 0						
9	9 0	9 9	10 6	11 3	12 0	12 9	13 6	15 9						
10	10 0	10 10	11 8	12 6	13 4	14 2	15 0	17 6						
11	11 0	11 11	12 10	13 9	14 8	15 7	16 6	19 3						
12	12 0	13 0	14 0	15 0	16 0	17 0	18 0	21 0						
13	13 0	14 1	15 2	16 3	17 4	18 5	19 6	22 9						
14	14 0	15 2	16 4	17 6	18 8	19 10	21 0	24 6						
15	15 0	16 3	17 6	18 9	20 0	21 3	22 6	26 3						
16	16 0	17 4	18 8	20 0	21 4	22 8	24 0	28 0						
17	17 0	18 5	19 10	21 3	22 8	24 1	25 6	29 9						
18	18 0	19 6	21 0	22 6	24 0	25 6	27 0	31 6						
19	19 0	20 7	22 2	23 9	25 4	26 11	28 6	33 3						
20	20 0	21 8	23 4	25 0	26 8	28 4	30 0	35 0						

Posting in 1840. Leigh's "Road Book."

the truth of their opinion. I can imagine many tracts of country, and there are certainly such in this country, wherein provisions cannot be dear. The inhabitants of those tracts are in the right to keep their secret ; make but a turnpike road through their country, and all the cheapness vanishes at once."[1] Poets rushed to the front, and glorified execrable roads in such verse as :

> Is there merit to gallop dead drunk in the dark
> On a plain turnpike road, as plain as Hyde Park,
> Where Londoners fine may tittup along,
> And coaches may pass and repass in a throng ?
> No, sir, though a blockhead, I won't be a knave :
> Good roads are the glory of Papist and slave.

Travellers missed no opportunity of denouncing a system which made such heavy demands on their pockets. In the middle of the eighteenth

Turnpike Tickets.

century one who posted from Dunstable to Dunchurch in a landau with four horses and one rider paid about 4s. or 6s. in tolls according to which route he took. The more lightly taxed road was that through Northampton, and the

[1] "Six Weeks' Tour," 317-18.

other *via* Towcester and Daventry.[1] At this time, indeed, a carriage drawn by two horses had sometimes to pay 5s. in a journey of only a dozen miles.

No less frequently did farmers anathematise turnpikes, on the ground that it was unjust to make them pay tolls as well as do statute labour on the roads. They were, however, soon able to rid themselves in part of the additional burden placed upon them. Availing themselves of a concession made by an Act of 10 George I. (1714), they, in common with other inhabitants of parishes through which turnpikes passed, compounded for the tolls. Thus, we find that in 1769 the Epping and Ongar trust had a number of compounders, whose payments for one year ranged from 5s. 3d. to £2 2s.[2]

But the bitterest and most serious hostility to turnpikes came from the mass of the populace, who, furious at being arrested for tolls upon roads which had always been "free," rose in bodies against the new form of taxation. In several Yorkshire towns mobs burnt or otherwise destroyed scores of gates. Rioters at Yeadon and Otley assembled in great force in June, 1753, and in one week swept away about a dozen turnpike gates and houses. While some of the men who had been arrested were being conveyed to York a rescue was attempted, whereupon the

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, xix. 219.

[2] B. Winstone, "Minutes of the Epping and Ongar Highway Trust."

soldiers fired on the people, many of whom were killed or wounded. At Selby the malcontents did still more damage. One morning they sent round the crier to summon the inhabitants to assemble with axes and hatchets at midnight to cut down the obnoxious gates, and when the appointed hour came the people accepted the invitation in crowds. The authorities, having been forewarned, had meanwhile drafted soldiers into the town ; but the local tollgates were so numerous that it was impossible to safeguard them all, and those which were not protected fell under the rioters' axes and hatchets. Leeds also was the scene of disturbance and bloodshed. In consequence of rioting, a number of Dragoons were drafted into the town to support the collectors at the bars. Shortly afterwards a carter, on refusing to pay at the Beeston turnpike, was seized by soldiers, who purposed to take him before the trustees at the King's Arms Inn, Briggate ; but a number of fellow-"levellers" rescued him and bore him off in triumph. The same night a mob of about 500 men assembled in Briggate, broke the windows and shutters of the King's Arms, and tore up the paving stones to throw at the soldiers. In the end the infuriated rioters were fired upon, with the result that ten were killed and twenty-four wounded.[1]

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxii. 237 ; xxiii. 343.

Similar organised outbreaks took place at Bristol, some of the turnpike gates in the environs of which city were repeatedly demolished. In 1749 one of the abhorred structures, which stood on the Ashton Road, near Bedminster, was razed three times. On the third occasion the rioters, after burning the timbers of this barrier, destroyed the Dundry turnpike, and went on to Bedminster, where they pulled down the house of a man who had arrested three rioters concerned in a previous attack on the gates. They then proceeded to what was known as the "strong turnpike," which was on Totterdown, between Bath and Pensford, and not only reduced the gates to matchwood, but demolished two sentry boxes and the collector's house. Rioting broke out again a few days later, and quietness was not restored till six troops of Dragoon Guards reached Bristol.[1]

Among the other towns where riots occurred was Ledbury, which was the theatre of several sanguinary conflicts. A large number of the people attacked the turnpikes there on September 22nd, 1735, and, notwithstanding that the armed men who defended them killed two of the rioters, succeeded in their object; and in a similar disturbance which took place a month later there were several fatalities. Of the men arrested on this occasion two were hanged at

[1] Gentleman's Magazine, xix. 376.

Worcester in the presence of many of the "turnpike levellers," who were awed by the attendance of a party of soldiers, and another took the fatal ride to Tyburn.[1]

Much of the general dissatisfaction with the turnpike system was due to the circumstance that the roads, notwithstanding the "legalised highway robbery" on them, were little, if any, better than they had been before. Some of those which were practically brought into being, and not repaired merely, under turnpike Acts were doubtless much improved by the abominated system. An example of this class was the road from London to Horsham, made in 1756. Before that year it was so execrably bad that whoever went on wheels was forced to go round by Canterbury, which "is one of the most extraordinary circumstances that the history of non-communication in this country can furnish. . . . It was no sooner completed than rents rose from 7s. to 11s. per acre."[2] But in general the anticipations of the Legislature were not realised. On this point there is ample evidence. In 1754 the Bath Road, according to an indignant critic, lacked a single redeeming feature. "It errs and blunders in all the forms," he wrote. "Its strata of materials were never worth a straw; its

[1] Gentleman's Magazine, v. 558, 618; vi. 229, 422.

[2] Young, "Survey of Sussex," 418. G. R. Porter states ("Progress of the Nation"), on the authority of an inhabitant of Horsham, that there is a tradition that before this road was made cattle could not be driven to the London market, and that the common local rate for a quarter of a fat ox was about 15s., while mutton was only five farthings per pound all the year round.

surface was never made cycloidal; it hath neither good side ditches nor footpaths for walkers: no outlets were made for water that stagnates in the body of the road; it was never sufficiently widened; nor were the hedges ever cleared. Of course, 'tis the worst public road in Europe, considering what vast sums have been collected from it."[1] Arthur Young[2] was still more severe on the road from Oxford to Witney. "Called," he said, "by a vile prostitution of language, a turnpike, but christened, I apprehend, by people who do not know what a road is, it is all of chalk stones, of which everywhere loose ones are rolling about to lame horses. It is full of holes, and the ruts are very deep." If the road from Market Harborough to Northampton was any better in 1747, the difference seems to have been very slight indeed. A traveller in that year stated that it was so bad that for "fear of life and limb" he left his "light Berlin" and walked several miles. On the way he "met twenty wagons tearing their goods to pieces, and the drivers cursing and swearing for being robbed on the highway by a turnpike screened under an Act of Parliament"; and when he reached Northampton he saw some soldiers who had been summoned to prevent the country from rising and cutting down the turnpikes.[3] We have, more-

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxiv., 348. [2] "Six Weeks' Tour," 90.
[3] *Gentleman's Magazine*, xvii., 233.

over, Smollett's views on Georgian roads. "Considering the tax we pay for turnpikes," Matt. Bramble wrote to Dr. Lewis, "the roads of this country constitute a most intolerable grievance. Between Newark and Wetherby I have suffered more from jolting and swinging than ever I felt in the whole course of my life, although the carriage is remarkably commodious and well hung, and the postillions were very careful in driving."

The causes of the generally unsatisfactory condition of the early turnpike roads are by no means obscure. They were mainly heavy capital charges and faulty administration. Before anything could be done towards improving a highway capital had to be raised. Parliament provided for this necessity by conferring power to borrow on the security of the tolls; and it was thus that the money wanted was usually obtained, though sometimes part of it was given by local gentlemen from philanthropic motives. In the case of the Cambridge-Ely road a bequest towards making and maintaining it was left by a Mr. Riste, and other contributions brought the total subscriptions up to £1,963 2s. 6d., which, with loans amounting to £5,000, constituted the capital.

Another troublesome operation was obtaining power to turnpike. As a special Act was essential, the promoters had to set in motion the costly machinery of private Bill legislation, meet hostile

petitions with counter petitions, and buy off or fight such opposition as could not safely be flouted. There could be no half measures, or the day was lost.

Petitions were commonly presented against a turnpike. No sooner had farmers in the environs of London obtained comparatively good roads for themselves than they strenuously opposed the extension of such boons to the more remote parts of the country. Fearful that agriculturists in those districts might, owing to cheapness of labour, undersell them in the London market, they fought hard against the development of highways outside their own particular territory.[1] On the other hand, some places feared contamination through better communication with the metropolis. When the road from London through Cuckfield to Brighton was promoted, it was proposed to carry it through Hurstpierpoint; but the residents of that village, apprehensive that it would bring down on them a horde of London cut-throats, pickpockets, and evil-doers in general, petitioned against it, and Parliament saved them from the impending plague.[2]

Such opposition as this, however, was trifling in comparison with that of towns which feared loss of traffic if a proposed new road was made; for in this case Parliament was implored not only

[1] A. Smith, "Wealth of Nations" (1904), i. 148.
[2] "Sussex Archæological Collections," xix. 168.

A Bath Road Pump. *Newport Toll.*

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to save its humble petitioners from ruin, but to give its support to the turnpiking of a rival road.[1] An instance took place in 1711. On the introduction of a Bill to turnpike the road between Aylesbury and Bicester, the bailiffs and burgesses of Buckingham promoted an opposition Bill, ostensibly that the traffic between Aylesbury and Banbury should not be diverted from their town. In the end both Bills were shelved, with the result that for many years the roads to which they related continued to be "ruinous."

Sometimes, therefore, the cost of obtaining power to turnpike amounted to one-eighth or even more of the capital, and at best it was far too heavy an incubus. Ultimately the turnpike roads of England and Wales were saddled with a charge of £2,000,000 for nothing more than the Acts by which the trusts were created and sustained. Many of those bodies obtained three Acts in ten years, at an average cost of £436 3s. each, their expenditure on legislation alone working out to about £100 per mile of road.

Capital charges were further swelled to an unreasonable extent by the cost of land. Owners had to be reckoned with, and they, as a class, notwithstanding that they would benefit most

[1] Justices sometimes organised and paid for opposition to turnpike Bills. At Guisborough Sessions, July, 1726, the Court ordered the treasurers to "pay Mr. David Burton £3 16s. for his charges and trouble in drawing a petition and getting hands to it against the turnpike proposed to be made between Darlington and Stockton."—"North Riding Records," viii. 175.

by improved roads, exacted their full pound of flesh. Strips of land which were wanted for widening roads were sometimes "peremptorily refused," and when it was proposed to "obtain a short cut or avoid a morass" by passing through a field permission was frequently withheld, and the trustees were put to "three times as much expense as the thing was worth."[1]

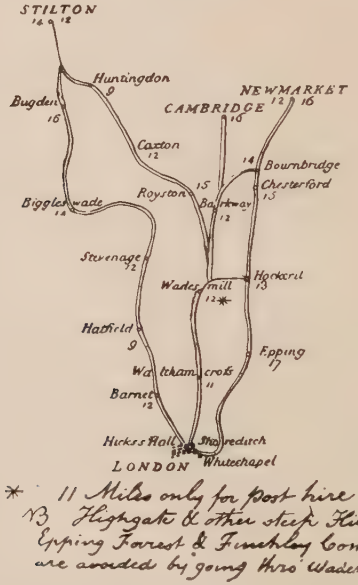
There were necessarily conspicuous exceptions to this rule. In some cases trusts were permitted to make or widen existing roads through public parks, as we see between Norwich and North Walsham, where for two miles the old way to Cromer runs through the grounds of Westwick House, and terminates at an arch containing two lodges, one of which was a tollhouse. Other landlords made still greater sacrifices to further the interests of transport. For the excellent roads round Bedford, for instance, we are mainly indebted to the Whitbread family, which treated the trusts with great liberality. When, in after years, railways were spreading over the land, Mr. W. H. Whitbread pursued the same enlightened policy, and was of such assistance in the construction of the Midland line that the directors of the company set up an obelisk to him in Southill Park. But, though some landowners displayed true public spirit in their dealings with trusts, the majority were no more accommodat-

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxiv. 396.

ing with them than they notoriously were at a later date with railway companies.

The administration of a turnpike Act was as clumsy and prodigal as the process by which it was obtained. By it the control of the road was vested in trustees, who usually formed a large and unwieldy body, frequently numbering a hundred or more, and having interests which were either all of a piece or else absolutely irreconcilable. If they were not small farmers or shopkeepers who never paid toll for themselves or their families, they included representatives of every class. In either case the traveller suffered. Trustees who worked together harmoniously were more interested in evading statutory obligations than in providing a good road suitable for through traffic, and those who did not left the management in the hands of the clerk and the surveyor, two officials whose combined knowledge of road-making was, as a rule, absolutely microscopic. James Macadam, on taking over the control of certain roads, found that the surveyors, with few exceptions, were either pluralists or men who ought to have been chargeable to the poor rate. At Epsom the surveyor had been an underwriter at Lloyd's; at Reading the holder of the office was also one of the commissioners at a salary of £30 a year; at Cheshunt there were three surveyors—an infirm old man, a carpenter, and a coal

merchant; and on the Wade's Mill trust, where also three surveyors were employed, the supervision was divided among a very old man, a publican at Buckland, and a baker at Backway, each of whom received 14s. a week.[1]



Rival Roads: The Back of an Innkeeper's Card.

With such a system of highway maintenance the public had ample reason to be dissatisfied. Cumbrous, costly, and grossly inefficient, it heavily taxed pocket and temper alike; and there is more cause for surprise in the resignation with which the country generally submitted to it than in

[1] Report of Committee on Consolidation of Turnpike Trusts (1833).

the circumstance that here and there it was violently opposed.

Soon after the middle of the eighteenth century some of the most glaring evils of the trusts were remedied by the Legislature, and irresistible pressure was brought to bear on those bodies from other directions with a view to compelling them more adequately to discharge the duties vested in them. The Post Office presented at sessions a number of turnpike roads, and coach proprietors, carriers, and innkeepers persistently tilted at the trustees. Owners of posting houses were particularly active in the cause of good roads, because their charges depended to some extent on the character of the surfaces over which their horses ran. Though the nominal rate of posting was so much per mile on all kinds of highways alike, the length of stage on good roads was sometimes under-reckoned, whereas on bad roads it was over-reckoned. "The innkeepers," says Paterson, in one of his many notes on posting, "charge fourteen miles post from Mansfield to Worksop, the road in some places being indifferent, with several gates to open." He gives the actual distance as twelve miles, showing that one extra mile in six was charged on account of the quality of the road. This and other details were of special importance on rival roads, as we can see reflected in business cards which innkeepers

Back of another Innkeeper's Card.

handed to their departing guests. On some of those distributed about 1780-90 by hosts on the old North Road the merits of this and the com-

petitive route are ingeniously contrasted, and the traveller is informed that by going through Wade's Mill and Huntingdon he could avoid not only the steep hills between London and Barnet, but Epping Forest and Finchley Common, both of evil repute at this period as highwaymen's hunting grounds, and also save a mile in posting. Altogether, therefore, a considerable amount of pressure was brought to bear upon trusts, which in consequence gradually became less inefficient bodies.

The effect on the roads was marked. As early as 1767 Henry Homer penned a glowing panegyric on our highways generally. "There never was," he roundly declared, "a more astonishing Revolution accomplished in the internal System of any Country than has been within the compass of a few Years in that of England. The Carriage of Grain, Coals, Merchandise, etc., is in general conducted with little more than half the Number of Horses with which it formerly was. Journies of Business are performed with more than double Expedition, Improvements in Agriculture keep pace with those of Trade, Every Thing Wears the Face of Dispatch, every article of our Produce becomes more valuable; and the Hinge upon which all these Movements turn is the Reformation which has been made in our publick Roads."[1] Little less emphatic was the

[1] "An Enquiry into the Means of Preserving and Improving the Public Roads," etc.

testimony of Daniel Bourn,[1] who favourably compared the roads at the time he wrote (1763) with those of thirty or forty years previously. The narrow ways, he said, "were narrow indeed, often to that degree that the stocks of the wheels bore against the banks on each side, and in many places they were worn below the level of the neighbouring surface many feet, nay, yards perpendicular." When the road was wide, on the other hand, it "often was too much so. . . . Wheel carriages had worn a diversity of tracts, which were either deep or rough and stony or high or low as mother nature had placed the materials upon the face of the ground."

To reconcile these accounts of Georgian roads with those of contemporary travellers would be very difficult. But that turnpikes in general did improve about 1760, and that only a few years later there was something like such a revolution as Homer speaks of, may be inferred from the regularity and speed with which coaches were run. For this reason, the toll system became, it would seem, less irksome towards the end of the eighteenth century, and it had certainly grown to such a degree by the closing years that most people looked upon it as a permanent institution.

[1] "A Treatise upon Wheeled Carriages."

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MET. BOROUGH OF PUBLIC

CHAPTER XI.

The Turnpike System: Its Zenith and Decline.

At the dawn of the nineteenth century the turnpike system went on spreading apace, till at last it looked as if it would cover all highways on which there was any through traffic whatever. Cary, in the first edition of his "New Itinerary," published in 1798, specially marked roads which were subject to toll; but he soon found it easier to indicate those which were not turnpiked, and before 1828 all the roads along which he guided travellers were, he told them, to be "considered as turnpike roads . . . unless otherwise expressed."

By 1829 there were in England alone (excluding Wales) 19,798 miles of such roads, the annual revenue from which was £1,455,293, or £73 per mile, and the trusts, which numbered 1,119, were maintained by no fewer than 3,783 Acts of Parliament, exclusive of General Turnpike Acts, which are among the longest and most complex of our laws, and in some of which are prescribed scores of penalties ranging from £1 to £100 each. In many rural parts of England at this time there was a tollgate every six or eight miles, while in towns collectors were in some cases within hail-

ing distance of one another. London possessed thirty-three gates, supplemented by thirty-eight side bars, which were barriers to prevent people from evading payment of toll. As a result, only such men as drovers, whose knowledge of lanes and tracks was profound, could escape the collectors. They were able to go from one town to another without being pulled up by a pikeman ; but ordinary wayfarers could no more avoid taxation than they could avoid death.

The Whitbread Memorial in Southill Park.

If this rapid increase in the cost of using the King's highway was alarming, it was not without its compensations ; for coincident with it was a very great improvement in most channels of communication. Roads were cut and sliced and patched in countless places. Widenings converted lanes into broad highways and death-traps into spots that the coachmen loved.[1] Here and there awkward junctions, at which many accidents had happened, were wholly abolished, sometimes by the erection of a bridge, such as that at Cripp's Corner, which carries a byway over the Maidstone-

[1] At the foot of a hill near Cringleford Church, on the Norwich-Thetford road, is a tablet, inscribed : "This Road was Widen'd 13 feet, Anno Domini 1823.—Garratt Taylor Knott, Surveyor."

Hastings road. Dangerous corners vanished by the hundred.[1] To avoid towns and villages, and, at the same time, shorten roads, angles and half-circles were cut out and relatively straight pieces substituted. By such a mode of betterment both Burford and Twinning were left off the Gloucester Road, and the coaches between London and Manchester made merely to skirt Stockport, going along the present Wellington Road, instead of continuing to pass through the middle of the town and over one of the worst stretches of urban road in England. Particular attention was paid to gradients, not only for the sake of horses, but because even angelic-tempered travellers sometimes rebelled against alighting from a coach in mid-winter and walking by its side as it slowly ascended a hill. Hollows were filled up, and if hills could not be cut through, tunnelled, or gone round, a fresh line was laid and a new road made. In most cases steep gradients were avoided, as at Dowdeswell, near Northleach, by making a détour; but the trusts frequently had recourse to cuttings, notably at Barnet, where drastic alterations converted a very trying hill into the present embanked slope, and the tunnel at Reigate, made in 1824, illustrates another mode by which they

[1] Many, however, still remain, including one which is so called. It is in the township of Wrightington, between Wigan and Southport, and derives its name from a tradition. At the spot, it is said, a hearse was overturned, with the amazing result that the "corpse" (a woman) came to life again. When the poor creature actually died, the sorrowing widower said firmly to the driver of the hearse, "And see tha' mak' no mistake this time. It's a dangerous corner!"

attained the same end. Sometimes, however, hopelessly hilly routes were abandoned and new ones constructed. The greatest improvement thus effected, perhaps, was between Chepstow and Monmouth, where traffic was diverted from the old way *via* Trellick to the fine road running along the banks of the Wye.

At the same time the surface of roads was vastly improved. Macadam's principles, introduced in the Bristol district in 1815, became so popular that on many of the roads under the control of trusts coaches could really roll along with that "fine fluent motion" which De Quincey credited to the Bristol mail, and in 1824 an era of fast coaches opened in all parts of the country.

Tollhouses also underwent a metamorphosis. Originally, as a rule, small, mean-looking structures, shining marks, indeed, for highwaymen, who frequently plundered them in the eighteenth century, but liable to be passed inadvertently by drivers strange to a road, they were in numerous cases replaced by more or less ornate structures, such as still remain at Andover, Devizes, and elsewhere. In the environs of London some of the new buildings were surmounted by a lantern to guide travellers on dark nights; and a not uncommon feature of the front was a clock, which recorded the official time. This was of no little import-

ance. Tolls were payable at any particular gate only once a day. Post horses which passed through a gate could return free before 9 a.m. (in some cases the hour was noon) the following day, and if horses went through a gate and returned the same day or within eight hours drawing a carriage, the toll paid on the horses was deducted. If, however, horses were only a minute after the specified time, they were not entitled to exemption. Disputes as to the "right time" were, therefore, very common, and it was mainly with a view to preventing them that some trusts placed a clock over the door of each tollhouse.

Of minor improvements which ameliorated travelling there were many. By degrees the Legislature imposed on trusts numerous duties to that end. They had to provide drains, set up boundary and other marks, fix name-boards on the outskirts of villages, water the roads, etc. The obligation to water roads, for which they were empowered to charge additional tolls, was, of course, enjoined for the purpose of minimising dust, which, much as we have heard of it since the advent of automobilism, was doubtless a far greater nuisance in the coaching age than it has ever been since. Miss Mitford, writing about 1830, vividly described its horrors. "Woe to white gowns! Woe to black!" she says. "Drab was your only wear. If we happened to meet a

carriage coming along the middle of the road. what a sandy whirlwind it was! What choking! What suffocation! No state could be more pitiable, except, indeed, that of the travellers who carry this misery about with them. I shall never forget the plight in which we met the coach one evening in last August—steeds and driver, carriages and passengers, all in dust." In consequence of the duty cast upon the trusts with the object of alleviating this plague, pumps were set up along trunk roads, and many of them still remain. There are some on the Uxbridge Road, the Exeter Road, and the Thetford, Wymondham, and Norwich Road, and a complete series extends all the way from Hounslow to Bath.

In London and its environs trusts were required to render special services, as lighting and watching, with a view to the safety of their roads. Such work was, in part, not novel to them, because from the early days of turnpikes they had undertaken certain police duties. In 1722 speaking trumpets were kept at some of the tollhouses, and were often used for communication after a robbery, though not always with success. One night a "travelling collector" held up a countryman near the tollhouse at Kingsland. As the belated wayfarer was about to hand over his money five or six horsemen came within hearing, and caused the

marauder to beat a precipitate retreat towards Islington. The collectors at the Kingsland turnpike, on being informed by the countryman of his fortunate escape, hailed the next tollhouse (at the turning towards Newington Green), and shouted, "Stop thief! Hold fast!" Hearing the call, the highwayman promptly jumped the banks, and, making a détour, entered the road again between the tollhouse at Newington Green corner and Islington, where he robbed a gentleman of twenty guineas and a watch. He then turned northward in the direction of Holloway, and finished his night's work by despoiling a coach travelling to Highgate.[1] Ultimately, however, the responsibility of watching, as well as of lighting, etc., was laid upon London trusts by statutory enactment.

Despite the good work done by the trusts, the long smouldering discontent with the turnpike system had meanwhile nearly burst into flames. Tolls, high though they had been in the previous century, were increased after 1800, and simultaneously the number of gates was added to by the creation of further trusts, each of which imposed its own rates without regard to the interests of either travellers or the adjoining trusts. Aylesbury groaned under the exactions of seven of such bodies; Carmarthen was afflicted with four,

[1] *Applebee's Journal*, March 17th, 1722.

which contrived to pull up anybody passing through the town in a particular direction three times in as many miles; and in 1825 four of the trusts in London (City Road, Old Street, Bethnal Green, and Shoreditch) controlled among them only $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles of road.[1] The effect on the cost of transport was remarkable. About 1820 the average rate of taxation for a coach with four horses was $3\frac{1}{2}$d. per mile, which represented an increase of 100 per cent. in fifteen years.[2]

Yet the debts of trusts steadily increased, till in 1829 they amounted in England alone to no less than £7,785,171, or £392 for every mile of turnpike road. This was equivalent to the total income from tolls for more than five years. It was common knowledge, too, that of the money taken from the public by the collectors only about 50 per cent. was spent on actually repairing and maintaining the roads.

There was, in truth, a great drain on the funds of trusts, and the need for less wasteful management became every year more strikingly apparent. Law costs increased rather than decreased; land could not be purchased except at twice or thrice its value; every trust, however

[1] Thirty years later, notwithstanding that by then the turnpike system was tottering to its fall, trusts were thickly clustered together in some parts of the country. A gentleman residing at Ledbury, when giving evidence before a Parliamentary committee in 1864, said that in the twenty-one miles between that town and Kingston there were eight turnpike gates, in the thirteen miles to Worcester six gates and five tolls, and in the eight miles to Newent four gates and three tolls.

[2] Report of Committee on the Better Construction and Maintenance of Turnpike Roads, etc. (1819).

	M	F	M	F
to Newton Whetle-				
ſton, *p.* 169	—		154	1
A Mile beyond Newton Whetleſton, on l. a T. R. to Clun and Biſhop's Caſtle.				
Little Stretton	7	—	161	1
*Church Stretton	1	4	162	5
to *Amerſham, *p.* 176	—	—	29	1
*Cheſham	3	—	32	1

G.P.O. LONDON to *Birmingham*, through *Warwick.*

Tyburn—*T. G.*			3	4
At Tyburn T. G. on l. a T. R. to Uxbridge.				
Paddington—*T. G.*	—	4	4	0
At Paddington, on l. to Harrow on the Hill; on r. a T. R. to Iſlington.				
Kilburn—*T. G.*	1	4	5	4
Croſs the Brent River.				
Hyde—*K. ſ. Abns*	4	2	9	6
Edgware—*T. G.*	1	7	11	5
At Edgware, on r. to St. Albans, thro' Idleſtrey.				
Stanmore	2	1	13	6
Buſhey — *Church, Herts.*	3	1	16	7
Croſs the Coln River.				
*Watford—*M. H.*	1	4	18	3
At Watford on r. a T. R. to St. Albans; on l. to Rickmanſworth.				
Hunton Bridge	3	3	21	6
Croſs the Gade River.				
King's Langley	1	4	23	2
Two Waters—*Bell*	2	3	25	5
Boxmoor	1	1	26	6
Bourn End	1	—	27	6
*Berk Hempſtead	2	1	29	7
North Church — *George*	1	3	31	2
*Tring—*P. O.*	3	7	35	1
Aſton Clinton, *Bucks*	3	—	38	1
Walton—*T. G.*	3	6	41	7
At Walton, on l. a T. R. through Wendover to London.				
Ayleſbury—*M. H.*	—	4	42	3
At Ayleſbury, on l. Turnpike Roads to Thame and Biceſter.				
Croſs the Thame River.				
Hardwick	3	4	45	7
Whitchurch	1	2	47	1
*Winſlow	5	5	52	6
Padbury	4	—	56	6
Croſs the Ouſe River.				
*Buckingham—*P. O.*	2	7	59	5
At Buckingham, on l. a T. R. to Banbury, thro' Aynhoe.				
Weſtbury	4	6	64	3
*Brackley, *Northa.*	2	3	66	6
At Brackley, on r. a T. R. to Towceſter; on l. to Oxford.				
Near Banbury, on r. a T. R. to Daventry.				
Croſs the Charwell River.				
*Banbury, *Oxon*	8	3	75	1
At Banbury, on r. a T. R. to Daventry; on l. to Chipping Norton.				
Through Banbury, on r. a T. R. to Southam; and a Mile further on r. to Warwick.				
Drayton—*T. G.*	2	1	77	2
Wroxton	—	7	78	1
Upton, *Warwick.*	4	2	82	3
At Upton on l. a T. R. to Stratford on Avon.				
*Kineton—*Swan Inn*	5	—	87	3
Compton Verney—*Bridge*	1	—	88	3
Wellesburne Haſting				
T. G.	2	3	91	6

Tolls on the Birmingham Road. Cary's "New Itinerary." Turnpike Gates are indicated by "T G."

Robin Hoods Well.
A Modern Traveller's Rest.

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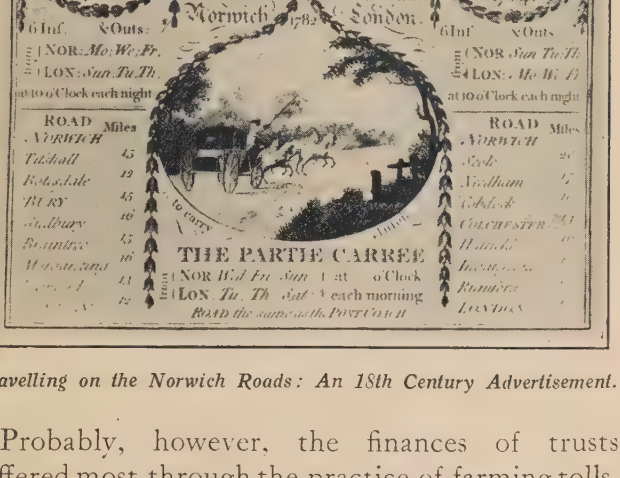
small, had its own set of officials and its own establishment; and when damage was done to land by taking materials from it for the purpose of repairing roads, as much as 1s. 3d. per cubic yard, which was at the rate of £600 per acre, or about £570 more than the freehold was worth, had frequently to be paid to the owner.[1]



Travelling on the Norwich Roads: An 18th Century Advertisement.

Probably, however, the finances of trusts suffered most through the practice of farming tolls. Under powers first granted by 3 George IV., c. 126, most trustees put up by auction, at an appointed time and place, the right to collect tolls at their several gates, usually for one year.

[1] Report of Committee on Turnpike Road Trusts (1833).

Though the prices obtained were nominally determined by public competition, they were in reality controlled by capitalists, singly or in combination, who at the lettings generally bought off opposition. This practice, indeed, was so common that some men made an excellent livelihood by rushing from one letting to another, and reluctantly accepting money not to bid. The usual price of their silence was from £1 to £5, though in one case as much as £2,000 was distributed among them and their kind at a single letting.[1] By this means the capitalists occasionally had "their forces so well disciplined as to prevent a single bid being given for the tolls,"[2] and, as the trustees then inferred that they were asking too high a rent, the tolls were subsequently re-let at a reduced rate. Sometimes, however, a newcomer succeeded in obtaining a pike, and then the "ring," instead of trying further to buy him out, set to work to crush him. They diverted traffic from his bars by virtually lowering tolls on an adjoining trust. This could not be done openly, because there was a penalty against taking a greater or lesser toll than that prescribed in the Act; but there was nothing to prevent such a practice as giving a driver a rebate in the form of the price of a pot of beer. The unfortunate speculator was consequently soon glad to retire from the field.

[1] Report of Committee on the Turnpike Trusts within Ten Miles of London (1825).
[2] R. Bayldon, "Turnpike Traffic and Tolls."

Aware of this trickery, trust officials met guile with guile. A mysterious "unknown" not infrequently attended a letting, and, rejecting proffered bribes, bid with a coolness and resolution that struck dismay into the ranks of the "pike corporation"; and it was not until he had been "knocked out" that they discovered that he was merely a "runner-up." Another and a more subtle ruse on the part of trusts was to let it be known, in general through circuitous channels, that in certain contingencies they would themselves work gates. This policy also was not wholly unsuccessful.[1] The last thing that the monopolists wished to happen was that trustees should do such a thing, even for a single year, because thereby they would, besides breaking down the monopoly, learn a most carefully guarded secret, namely, the amount of tolls actually collected. But there was no effectual method of checkmating the organised farmers, whose capital was such as to enable them to play with a trust as they liked. A Mr. Tongue, of Manchester, had, it was estimated, more than £50,000 invested in gate hiring in Bucks. and the adjoining counties, and about 1825 the head of the London "pike corporation" was a man

[1] In London it had a remarkable effect. The maximum revenue from the roads under the control of the commissioners was in 1838, when it amounted to £83,497. It then declined to £67,475 in 1840. From 1843, however, tolls were let at a small advance, and for the year ending Lady Day, 1845, they brought £66,414. The only reason for that advance was that the commissioners passed a resolution to work gates by their own servants if they were not sold on the day of letting.

named Lewis Levy, who himself had an enormous sum sunk in toll leasing, and who is said to have died a millionaire.[1] The farming system, in fact, involved the trusts in enormous losses. Those bodies seldom, if ever, got a fair price for the rights they let, and when a royal visit or other important event drew many thousands of people

Tetsworth Cutting.

into a place they were invariably heavy losers, because their roads were badly cut up by extra traffic from which they did not derive any benefit whatever.

But, though public feeling against turnpikes frequently rose to great heights in the period 1800-29, it did not culminate in such outbreaks as had taken place when they were becoming

[1] Report of Select Committee on Turnpike Trusts (1864).

established and the system continued to expand till 1837, when, judged by receipts from tolls, it reached its zenith.[1] The revenue from such dues in that year rose to £1,509,985, and then began to decline, falling to £1,097,482 in 1849, £1,038,980 in 1861, and £945,458 in 1866.

Before 1837, however, several breaches had been made in the turnpike system. Its ultimate downfall was first indicated in 1826, when the Treasury, with a view to improving the financial position of trusts, began to pay the Parliamentary fees on turnpike Bills. This step was soon followed by consolidating trusts and abolishing numerous offices. On the Holyhead Road many of such bodies were united, a board of commissioners superseding the local trusts; and a similar reform was carried out in London, where the multiplicity of turnpike gates was a grievance of long standing. An early effect of the change was that the metropolis was divided into districts for toll purposes, and another welcome concession to the public was made in 1830, when twenty-five gates, including one near Holland House, Kensington, were swept away.

After 1839 the amalgamation of trusts became common in many parts of the country, mainly owing to serious rioting in that year in South

[1] An additional indication that turnpikes reached their zenith in 1837 is that then coaches attained their maximum number. At the beginning of that year the Commissioner of Stamps licensed 3,026, inclusive of 54 four-horse and 49 pair-horse "mails." At the end of the same year the debts of the trusts amounted to £8,500,000, of which £1,000,000 was unpaid interest.

Wales, where the pent-up disaffection of the people could no longer be restrained. Beginning in Pembroke and Carmarthenshire, the outbreak quickly spread, till of all the counties in South Wales Brecknockshire alone was unaffected. Bands of men 400 or 500 strong, and called, from a ludicrous application of Genesis xxiv. 60 ("And they blessed Rebecca and said unto her . . . let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them"), Rebeccaites,[1] scoured the countryside and demolished posts and gates in great numbers. On some turnpikes they made an absolutely clean sweep, and when gates were re-erected destroyed them again and again, with the result that the trustees were in the end compelled to leave the roads free. Keepers of the gates, with one exception, were not injured. The exception was an old woman at Hendry, on the borders of Glamorganshire and Carmarthenshire, who was unquestionably shot dead, though at the inquest the jurymen professed to be doubtful on that point. They solemnly gave it as their opinion that "the deceased died from effusion of blood into the chest, which occasioned suffocation, but from what cause is to this jury unknown!"

[1] The accepted origin of the name, as here given, is open to grave suspicion. Much more probable is the derivation supported by H. T. Evans in his exhaustive study of the outbreak ("Rebecca and Her Daughters"). Thomas Rees, of Mynachlogddu, Pembroke, was a leader of the rioters, and as such he had to wear women's garments, in accordance with the precedent established in the previous century, when many of the "turnpike levellers" had disguised themselves in female attire. Being a very tall, powerful man, he experienced much difficulty in procuring a gown big enough to fit him; but at last one which could be made suitable was obtained from a massive old maid named Rebecca. Hence, it is said, the rioters came to be known as "Rebeccaites."

Rioting broke out intermittently for more than three years, and then troops were poured into South Wales, and the Rebeccaites, after an obstinate resistance, were put down. A Government commission was subsequently appointed to enquire into the cause of the outbreak. On its report, some of the grievances were remedied, and the Rebeccaites who had been arrested were only lightly punished; and by this action the Legislature furthered the cause of toll reform not only in South Wales, but throughout the whole country.

One of the minor consequences of the unification of trusts was that turnpike tickets became packed with details of a more or less enigmatical nature. In the early days of the toll system such vouchers had borne nothing but the name of the trust and the date, with, in some cases, the amount of the toll; but after a good deal of consolidation had been effected they were, as a rule, less simple, though smaller in size and meaner in typography. In general, there was a notice on each ticket that it cleared other gates, which were set out at length, and the location of which called for more topographical knowledge than the ordinary traveller possessed. On most of the London tickets, however, the names of the bars cleared were not specified; each ticket usually cleared "all bars on this district." An exception was that for the Highgate gate, which stated that it cleared no other gate.

In 1836, moreover, the Government had take in hand the debts of turnpike trusts, and begu to wipe them out by drastic measures. Interes on mortgages was reduced, in one instance t only 1d. per cent.; bondholders were compelle to accept a proportion of their money, as £75 o £80 for £100; and many debts were liquidate without the payment of a farthing. A remark able reduction was made in the case of a trus which nominally owed £106,000, exclusive o interest. Two noblemen (the Duke of Devon shire and the Duke of Rutland) had advance £100,000 of the amount. As they had not ha any interest for many years, and as the road mad by the trust had greatly increased the value o their property, they were quite willing to foreg the money, and consequently the £100,000 wa written off, leaving only £6,000 due to the othe mortgagees.[1] By such methods as these millio of liabilities were extinguished, not a little t the dismay of many investors, who had looke upon the turnpike system as one of the integr parts of the Constitution.

Finally, a committee of the House of Commo had in 1836 reported adversely to a continuan of turnpikes. "Although your committee they said, "can scarcely arrive at any other co clusion than that the abolition of tolls throug out the kingdom would be beneficial to the con

[1] Report of Committee on Turnpike Trusts (1864).

munity, they cannot withhold their expressions of regret at the difficulties that present themselves in the substitution of any other mode of revenue available for that purpose."[1]

We see, then, that, notwithstanding the continuous increase in the receipts from tolls up to 1837, the turnpike system had received some heavy blows before that year, and that it would probably have been abolished, or, at least, greatly altered, had not steam communication turned traffic into new channels. That so absurd and clumsy a method of highway maintenance could have survived for many years longer, at all events without considerable modification, is utterly unthinkable. As it was, the system initiated by the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester line in 1830 actually gave turnpikes their death blow.

At first the spreading of railways revitalised the trusts and stimulated them to renewed activity in highway amendment. Partly from self-interest, and partly owing to the influence brought to bear by innkeepers, coach proprietors, and others whose trade was threatened, they again applied themselves to improving their roads, particularly by reducing gradients, that coaches might travel still faster, and outstrip the trains. Butster Hill, on the Portsmouth Road, was thus made easier for horses

[1] Report of Committee on Turnpike Trusts and Tolls (1836).

to surmount; a similar work was carried out at Tetsworth, on the Oxford Road; and the commissioners of the Holyhead Road made an enormous gash in the chalk at Dunstable for the purpose of facilitating the traffic to and from Ireland. When, in April, 1742, the first coach reached that town, it passed along the road which

A Wiltshire Tollhouse: Shanes Castle, Devizes.

the Romans had made, notwithstanding that seven or eight horses were required to drag it over Chalk Hill. Forty years afterwards a new road was constructed, at a cost of £16,000, to avoid this hill, and about 1836 the competition of the Birmingham (now the London and North-Western) Railway brought about the present cutting through the chalk, which was made at an outlay of £10,000. But the commissioners

did not stop here. They constructed, in addition, a massive causeway at Foster's Booth, near Towcester. This undertaking, which consists of two channels of blocks of stone laid longitudinally, with an intervening pavement, was for the purpose of enabling the coaches to ascend the hill more rapidly, and, though they are said never to have used it, because they were knocked off the road before it was completed, it is still much appreciated by wagoners, whose wheels fit it nicely. The trusts, however, soon realised that all their efforts would be unavailing, and that a new era in transport was close at hand.

Here and there a few died before 1850, and afterwards the rate of mortality became higher year by year, though many did not expire without a desperate struggle. Numbers were in a moribund condition for years, and were, so unconscionable a time in dying that they exhausted the patience of the ratepayers. In numerous cases the whole produce of the tolls, after deducting establishment charges, was devoted to the payment of the interest on the debt. There was not a farthing towards the maintenance of the road and the tollhouses, the entire cost of which consequently fell upon the parish. The ratepayers had thus to pay toll upon a road which was kept in repair by themselves.

Nearly all the tollbars round London lingered till 1864, when 108 were abolished at a single

operation, and other 61 were swept away the following year. But in the metropolis itself the old barriers, despite a vigorous agitation, in which Joseph Hume and other stern reformers took a prominent part, continued to be a nuisance till long afterwards. Vainly did the opponents of the system, backed up by the Press and fortified by the views of several Parliamentary committees besides that of 1836, dwell on the inequalities of the tolls, the value of houses just outside the bars as contrasted with that of similar dwellings just within them, and the prejudicial effect on public health of the practice of erecting stables, cow-houses, slaughter-houses, cattle-sheds, etc., inside the gates to avoid the payment of tolls. While the weight of opinion was decidedly against the system, it was generally believed that the substitution of a tax would be still more partial in its operations, and would fail to afford adequate relief. The same feeling largely prevailed in the country; and in Yorkshire, where the introduction of turnpikes had been resisted with much violence, the abolition of tolls was actively opposed by some farmers and manufacturers, on the ground that the cost of maintaining roads would become an intolerable burden to the parish.

For these and other reasons turnpikes disappeared very slowly. As late as 1870 there were 5,000 persons engaged in toll collecting. Many

roads were disturnpiked by the Highways and Locomotives Act, 1878, and similar statutes, and the rest were made nominally "free" in 1889, when the present chaotic mode of highway administration was introduced throughout Great Britain.

But even now tolls are not wholly abolished; for at many parts of the King's highway the traveller is still liable to be pulled up and made to pay in advance for the use of the road. If these survivals have never been connected with trusts, they are none the less essentially part and parcel of the system to which our forefathers so strongly objected. Whether money is collected by virtue of a local or personal Act or without any statutory authority at all, the principle is identical with that which the trusts administered. Money has been spent by private persons on a road, and is now being recovered by tolls.

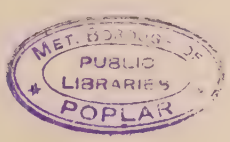
One of the few tollhouses still remaining under enclosure Acts stands at Seacroft, on the Leeds-Tadcaster road. Though there is no barrier here, and though most traffic is now allowed to pass free, the right of collecting certain dues is to this day vested in the lord of the manor. On the tollhouse is a notice that toll is payable by virtue of the Barwick-in-Elmet Enclosure Act, 1796; but there is no intimation that the occupier is (or was) bound to provide a horse to take people over Whinmoor. A similar relic on the Newmarket Road was established under a personal

Act. Known as "Newport Toll," it is an ordinary wayside cottage in the village from which it is named, and there is nothing but part of a bar to distinguish it from thousands of similar dwellings. It serves to commemorate an improvement which the wayfarer is prone to pass unnoticed. Under the road a short distance from the house runs a little stream which for centuries was unbridged. As there were many accidents at the spot, and as neither the county nor the parish would build a bridge, the lord of the manor obtained an Act empowering him to do the work and reimburse himself by levying a toll. A gate was consequently placed across the road to arrest traffic, very little of which, except that to and from certain villages, escaped taxation; and the powers conferred by the Act are still exercised, though with much less strictness than formerly. Indeed, it is only now and again that anybody is subjected to the shock of being asked for toll.

Of the bars which exist without any statutory authority there is a curious specimen at Bugsworth, Derbyshire. Several local capitalists constructed a highway about a mile in length from that village in the direction of the Stockport and Manchester road. When the railway to Whaley Bridge was made, the line was thrown across the end of the road, and it was blocked up. The speculators, whose funds had become exhausted, then mortgaged the road, that they might complete

it by taking a circuitous route into the Buxton and Manchester road. This was done, and the road is now the property of the mortgagee's successors, who keep it in repair, and recoup themselves by the proceeds of a tollbar, the only one now remaining in this part of the country.

When the last tollgate shall disappear few obvious relics will be left of a system which, though bad in principle and inequitable and irritating in practice, was instrumental in vastly improving the King's highway. Established at a time when our roads were, for the most part, mere tracks, rutty, tortuous, hilly, and everywhere so soft that wheels sank deep into them, it lasted in full vigour till they had become, perhaps, the finest in the world, and certainly well fitted for any kind of horsed traffic. By it they were transformed, and by it for the first time easy and safe communication was possible at any season.



CHAPTER XII.

By the Roadside.

Among the many faults of old road maps is the lack of anything to indicate the numerous objects that stood by the wayside. Gallows are sometimes shown, and occasionally a cross is duly marked; but no trace can be seen of other features. Judging from the work of early cartographers, indeed, there was nothing else intended to meet the traveller's eye. We know from other sources, however, that the publicity obtainable on the lines of traffic was recognised even in Saxon times, and that from then crosses and other things of a religious, commemorative, or deterrent character accumulated on the fringe of the King's highway.

Many of these adjuncts of the road have been wantonly destroyed or reduced to metal by ignorant surveyors to whom a stone was a stone and nothing more. On some roads a clean sweep was made of such relics soon after the downfall of coaching, when the King's highway reached its nadir. But, though many wayside objects have gone, we still have examples of nearly every kind with which the old-time traveller was familiar.

One of the earliest things set up by the roadside was the cross. St. Wilfred, Archbishop of York at the beginning of the eighth century travelled about his diocese with a large number of monks and workpeople, among whom were masons, and erected crosses on spots which he consecrated to the worship of God. Whether this example was followed by abbots and other bishops is not stated; but probably so good a work was taken up by later dignitaries. It is certain, at all events, that many crosses were set up in early times, primarily, and sometimes exclusively, to arouse devotion, but in many cases also to mark boundaries, battlefields, halting places of funeral parties, and scenes of violent death and of other remarkable events; and no less indisputable is it that the land on which crosses now stand belonged, as a rule, to some monastic or ecclesiastical body.

Wayside Cross at Wheston.

Some fine boundary crosses are still in existence, notwithstanding the great destruction of such objects in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many crosses of all kinds were swept away at the Reformation, and those which survived

till the suppression of the smaller religious houses in 1536 and 1539 were allowed to stand on sufferance only. A still more drastic step was taken in 1643, when an ordinance was made, at the instance of Cromwell and the Puritan party

Saintbury Cross.

for removing and defacing all crosses in and upon all churches or chapels and other open places. This edict obviously included boundary crosses. But somehow a few of those landmarks escaped Puritan zeal in endeavouring to purge the land of superstition. A notable example is Leg's Cross, near Darlington. Standing on the fringe of Watling Street, it marks the boundary between Bolam and Auckland townships, and bears some eighth century tracery work. Other

interesting crosses of the same type are Kenulph's (or Turketel's), between Crowland and Thorney, and St. Guthlac's, at Brotherhouse, between Crowland and Cowbit. A remarkable relic of such landmarks is by the wayside between St. Ives, Huntingdon, and Ramsey. Popularly known as the "Abbot's chair," it seems to be either the base of a cross or the remains of a stone which marked the jurisdiction of the Abbey of Ramsey. The seat was formerly well raised from the ground; but, as it was wantonly overturned, the local authorities had it sunk deeper.

Other kinds of crosses are numerous. Between Norwich and Cromer stands a battlefield cross, which marks the spot where John the Litster, the self-styled "King of the Commons," was overthrown by the martial Bishop of Norwich during the Peasant Revolt in the fourteenth century. Funeral crosses are nobly represented by some of the memorials set up by Edward I. at the halting places of the procession in which the body of Queen Eleanor was borne from Hardeby, in Nottinghamshire, to the Abbey at Westminster. The only Eleanor cross by the open way is on the London Road at Hardingstone, near Northampton. It was perfect till the Commonwealth, when it was decapitated. In the reign of Queen Anne the justices substituted for the missing part a new cross out of proportion with the canopy work, and also affixed a sundial

to each face of the original structure. All these additions were subsequently removed, and "Queen's Cross," as the beautiful memorial is popularly called, is now substantially as the Puritan iconoclasts left it. Wayside crosses which seem to have been set up solely from motives of piety are still common, though nearly all are more or less imperfect. Good unmutilated examples survive at North Cerney and Saintbury, in the Cotswolds, and a remarkable calvary, the best cross, perhaps, in the Midlands, is embowered in trees at Wheston, Derbyshire.

From the custom of erecting crosses at cross-roads sprang that of burying suicides there People who, by reason of their having committed self-murder, were excluded from the usual rites of the Church were buried at the foot of a cross on the highway as a place next in sanctity to consecrated ground. Thrusting a stake through the body was not practised in early times, but was a barbarism introduced at a more recent period.

Though the memory of a cross-roads burial is seldom preserved except by name, the grave itself is sometimes well marked. On one about four miles from Winchester, at a spot locally known as the "Three Maids," is a wooden cross. Here, it is said, three sisters were buried "quick"—that is, alive—for murdering their father by pouring molten lead into his ear. One

of the unfilial daughters, tradition further states, was kept alive two or three days longer than her sisters by an apple which a compassionate wayfarer gave her. It is much more probable, however, that the grave is that of a suicide.

The "Three Maids," near Winchester, and Jacob's Post, Ditchling.

No less plain is "Betty's Grave," near Poulton, Gloucestershire. The traveller who looks to the finger-post for guidance is startled to see on one of its arms the words, "Betty's Grave," followed by a rude cross, and then he notices an unmistakable grave by the wayside. Its legendary history is curious. Betty made a wager that she would reap an acre of wheat within a certain time, accomplished the task, dropped dead, and was buried where she had fallen. But, as a fact,

the woman, who was a native of Poulton, committed suicide by taking poison.

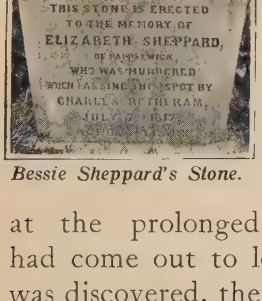
A similar history probably attaches to a grassy mound at cross-ways on the Newmarket-Bury St. Edmunds road, though tradition is, as usual, against the obvious theory. The mound is known all over the countryside as the "Boy's Grave," and is said to contain the mortal remains of a shepherd boy who, losing a sheep from his flock, and being afraid to face his employer, hung himself on the adjacent finger-post.

The practice of marking the scenes of violent deaths has been continued to the present day, and the most common memorial is still the emblem of the Christian faith, though in the simplest possible form. It is a cross cut in the grass by the roadside. Round Dunstable, Swindon, Marlborough, and other towns such crosses must needs be noticed by the most unobservant. In some cases a cross is so old that its history has been forgotten; but it is nevertheless re-cut by the road-menders in due season.

There are, however, many more conspicuous memorials of road tragedies. Several ancient crosses by the wayside about which nothing is definitely known were probably set up to bear witness to murders, and a number of modern memorials were avowedly erected to this end; and it is not without significance that such stones, old and new alike, are in general well cared for.

More than one of them has been re-faced and re-cut.

A modern murder memorial, "Bessie Sheppard's stone," stands on the Nottingham-Mansfield road, and keeps alive the memory of a peculiarly callous crime. In 1817 a girl named Elizabeth Sheppard, who lived at Papplewick, was returning home from Mansfield, where she had been looking for work, when she was overtaken by Charles Rotherham, a tramping tinker. Without speaking to her, the villain struck her on the head with a heavy stick, and then threw the body into the ditch, though not before taking from it a pair of shoes, which, with the poor girl's umbrella, constituted his sole spoil. Further along the road he passed Mrs. Sheppard, who, alarmed at the prolonged absence of her daughter, had come out to look for her. When the body was discovered, the bereaved mother's description of the dastard enabled the police to get on his trail; and in this way, coupled with his attempting to sell the boots and umbrella, he was traced to Red Hill and thence to Loughborough, near which town he was arrested. He at once confessed his guilt, and in due course paid the penalty of his crime without expressing the least contrition.



Bessie Sheppard's Stone.

Another murder memorial is let into the wall bordering the old coaching road between Disley and Buxton. It records the death of William Wood, an Eyam farmer. Returning home from Manchester and Stockport markets, Wood called at an inn at Disley, and, having obtained some refreshments, continued his journey. Next day his body was found by the wayside, nearly covered with stones which had been pulled from the wall, and with the skull beaten in and shattered. According to a local tradition, the murderer only gained 2½d. by killing the farmer, but actually the plunder was about £100.

In a wall at Wrotham, Kent, is a tablet commemorating a different kind of road tragedy. Lieutenant-Colonel Shadwell, in June, 1799, left London with the intention of returning to Maidstone, where his regiment (the 25th Light Dragoons) was stationed. On reaching Wrotham, he saw a couple of wayfarers whom he suspected or knew to be deserters, and demanded to see their furlough papers. With an oath, one of the men instantly pulled out a pistol and shot him dead. The murderer then made off over the fields; but he was intercepted by a farmer who had witnessed the deed, and who, on his showing fight, promptly peppered him with small shot, and secured him. Both men were brought to trial on the capital charge, though only the actual culprit, Philip Keating by name, was convicted and hanged.

Tragic, again, is the story of "Kalabergo's stone," a wayside memorial near Wardington. Kalabergo was an Italian watchmaker who, to escape conscription, fled to this country, and ultimately settled at Banbury. In 1851, after he had resided in that town for about forty years, a nephew joined him as assistant in his business, and began to accompany him on his regular journeys with jewellery, etc., to the neighbouring villages. As the two were returning home one evening in the following winter, young Kalabergo shot the old man dead, and then rushed into Banbury, saying that they had been attacked by footpads, and that his poor uncle had been killed. This fabrication, however, fell flat. The actual culprit was instantly suspected, and, after being tried and convicted on conclusive evidence, was hanged at Oxford.

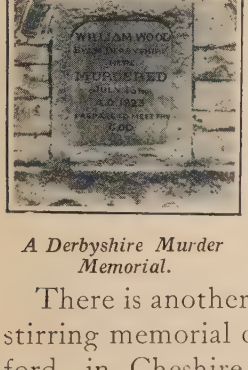
One of the most remarkable memorials of this class stands at Hindhead, on the Portsmouth Road, to bear witness to the murder of an unknown sailor, who is further commemorated by a great cross of Cornish granite erected by Sir William Earle. In September, 1786, the poor seafarer who was killed hereabouts met at Esher three men (Edward Lonegon, James Marshall, and Michael Casey) on tramp in search of work. He not only treated them to drink, but generously offered to pay their expenses to Portsmouth, and they proceeded together along the road. When

they reached Hindhead, his execrable companions knocked him down and cut his throat, and, after stripping his body, rolled it into the hollow. The three villains then went on to Sheet, near Petersfield, where they were taken while in the act of selling their victim's clothes. After being executed, they were gibbeted on Hindhead. The grave of the unfortunate sailor in Thursley Churchyard is conspicuous by an elaborate headstone carved with a dramatic representation of the crime.

Murder Memorial at Wrotham, Kent.

On the scenes of fatal accidents there are several similar memorials, and two or three of a less conventional character stand where travellers were overtaken by death in different circumstances. An example of the rarer kind of monuments is a massive seat in Dartmoor granite, on the main road between Exeter and Lyme Regis, to the memory of Dr. Gilbart-Smyth, a well-known London physician, who in 1905 dropped dead while on a cycling tour. Connected with the fatality there was a remarkable coincidence. With Dr. Gilbart-Smyth were two of his daughters, and when he fell from his cycle one of them set off to obtain help.

Night having fallen, and the district being thinly populated, she was two hours in procuring assistance, and it was late when the corpse was carried to the nearest cottage and reverently laid on a couch. The bearers then saw on the wall above where the body lay a framed photograph of the deceased gentleman himself. By chance the physician's corpse had been brought into the house of a labouring man who, many years before, had been stricken with an apparently incurable disease, who had as a last resource travelled to London and entered one of the great hospitals there, who had been snatched from the grave by Dr. Gilbart-Smyth, and who, full of gratitude to his preserver, had purchased a photograph of him and given it the place of honour in his humble home.



A Derbyshire Murder Memorial.

There is another and a much more imagination-stirring memorial of a wayside death near Saltersford, in Cheshire. It is a tablet bearing two inscriptions. The first reads:

Here John Turner was cast away in a heavy snowstorm about the year 1735.

Underneath are the lines:

The print of a woman's shoe was found by his side in the snow where he lay dead.

Wells possessing more or less miraculous properties were also frequently come to by early

travellers. Holy wells, many of which were scattered along the wayside in the Middle Ages, have mostly disappeared, but numbers of a lower order are passed by present-day wayfarers. Of these survivals the most celebrated is one associated with Robin Hood. Situated on the Great North Road, about six miles from Doncaster, it has for centuries been known as "Robin Hood's Well," from the tradition that at it the outlaw met the Bishop of Hereford, whom he afterwards held to heavy ransom and compelled to dance a jig round an oak in Skelbrooke Park. The actual tree was long shown to ultra-curious travellers, and its site, called "Bishop's Tree Root," is still pointed out.

For many years very few wayfarers rode past the well without quaffing its water, sitting in a stone chair, and going through a burlesque ceremony, even runaway lovers pausing, it is said, in their flight to the Border, to conform to usage. Describing the stage from Doncaster to Pontefract, a gentleman who made a tour in 1634 says: "In the midway (to season our that morning's-purchased-trauelling plate), being thirsty, we tasted a cup at Robin Hood's Well, and then, according to the vsuall and ancient custom of travellers, were in his rocky chaire of ceremony dignify'd with the order of knighthood and sworne to observe his lawes. After our oath we had no time to stay and heare our charge,

but discharg'd our due fealtie fee, 4d. a peece to the Lady of the Fountain. On we spur'd with our new dignity to Pomfret."[1] Twenty years later Evelyn visited the well. "Near it," he says, "is a stone chaire and an iron ladle to drink out of chained to the seat." The well at this time was open, but towards the end of the seventeenth century the building which now covers it was erected by Vanbrugh for the Earl of Carlisle. Many famous travellers subsequently drank at it; for it continued to be one of the "objects of interest" on the way to Scotland till the end of the coaching era. Hard by, at the Red House, now a farmhouse, but formerly an inn, horses were changed, and passengers took advantage of the break to walk as far as the well and sip a cup of its water.

At a comparatively early period, too, gibbets appeared on the wayside near the scenes of crimes, particularly of murders, with the object not only of striking terror into evil-doers, but of affording "a comfortable sight to the relations and friends of the deceased." They were not very common, however, before 1752, when hanging in chains was first recognised by law. Then the number of the ghastly structures, from each of which depended a body blackening in the sun, increased so rapidly that the traveller sometimes passed a dozen or more in a mile. Abhorrent as

[1] "A Relation of a Short Survey of Twenty-six Counties."

the spectacle must have been, gibbeting was not formally abolished till 1834, two years after the last hanging in chains took place in this country. The body which attained such distinction was that of one George Cook, who committed a murder at Leicester. It was placed on a gibbet 33ft. high in Saffron Lane, near the Aylestone tollgate; but the indignities to which it was subjected were so disgraceful that the Under-Secretary of State soon ordered it to be taken down.

"Mail Pillar" at Finedon, Northants.

Sites of gibbets are now mostly indicated, if at all, by place-names, such as Gibbet Hill, on the Coventry - Kenilworth road, though in a few cases they are marked by posts. There is a memorial of this kind at Caxton, on the Great North Road; another stands near Atherstone; and "Jacob's Post," on Ditchling Common, Sussex, is a relic of the same kind. With the last-named a sanguinary story is connected. Jacob Harris, a Jewish pedlar, one night in 1734 put up at an inn which then faced the road near the post, and while his host, a man named Miles, was cleaning his horse, he attacked him from behind and cut his throat. Alarmed by the

noise, a servant girl ran downstairs, only to be treated in like manner. The Jew then ascended to the upper part of the house, and cut the throat of Mrs. Miles, who lay on a sick bed. "In the meantime," crudely narrates a contemporary ballad-monger,

> The poor distressed maid
> Had got away, for so her neighbours said.
> He, missing her, into the stable ran,
> And looked about, but could not find her there.
> He thought there was no time to delay,
> But took his horse with speed, and rode away.
> The women both that night this world forsook,
> But Miles did live till the wretch was took.

The landlord was able, moreover, to identify his assailant, who was tried and sentenced to death.

> At Horsham Gallows he was hanged there
> The 31st August the same year;
> And where he did the crime they took the pains
> To bring him back and hang him up in chains.
> It is a dismal sight for to behold—
> Enough to make a heart of stone run cold.

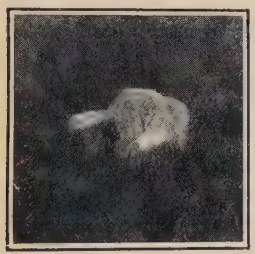
Jacob was, in fact, gibbeted on the spot marked by the post, which has been replaced at least once. The predecessor of the present memorial, cut out of the vane on the top of which is the date, "1734," was thickly studded with nails, driven in by people in detestation of the crime. Till recent times carriers and others who passed it once or twice a week never failed thus to manifest their feelings; and in the end the pole was so full of nails that there seemed to be no room for another one.

Further to affrighten highwaymen, a class from which were drawn many of the malefactors whose bodies were gibbeted, a few memorials of highway robberies were placed on the selvedge of their territory. From the first half of the eighteenth century, if not from an earlier date, to as late as about 1840, such warnings were added to the older wayside objects as opportunity served, and some of them yet remind us

Betty's Grave, Poulton, near Cirencester.

of a danger that constantly threatened travellers. One of the best preserved is "Clibbon's Post," near Queen Hoo Hall, Herts. It commemorates a man named Clibbon, who, while ostensibly earning an honest livelihood as a pieman in Hertford Market, actually frequented the market for the purpose of ascertaining which farmers would return home with money, and then, assisted by his wife and sons, waylaid and robbed

them. Clibbon's career ended tragically. One night in December, 1782, a farmer named Wittenbury was returning from Hertford, and had nearly reached his homestead, when he was attacked. His cries for help were promptly answered by some of his relatives, and a servant armed with a gun also came to his assistance. But the robber, undaunted by the approach of the rescuers, knocked down Wittenbury, and pulled out a clasp knife to stab him. "Shoot, Shock," the farmer then called to the servant, "or I'm a dead man." Shock did shoot, and the villain sank on his intended victim, lifeless. Great was the surprise of the party on discovering that the dead man was Clibbon, whose body, with a stake through it, was buried on the spot where the post now stands.



The "Abbot's Chair," near St. Ives.

An obelisk which is said to have been erected with a similar intent rises above the hedge at the cross-roads at Finedon, near Kettering, tradition relating that its office is to mark the scene of a mail coach robbery which took place near the spot in 1810. It is, however, doubtful what happening the object was intended to commemorate, as there is no inscription on it, and local annals go to

show that it was in existence before the mail coach was robbed. The most probable theory is that it was set up as a token of rejoicing for the recovery of George III. from his illness at the close of the eighteenth century.

Another class of wayside objects directly connected with the road were travellers' rests, of which there were formerly many. One of the oldest remaining is a small rustic building of flint and stone on the hill at Esher. About 1840 it was known, from a well of excellent water at the side, as "Wolsey's Well"; but it certainly was then, as it is now, a travellers' rest. On the front of the structure are carved the initials, "H. P.," and a buckle, part of the family arms of Mr. Pelham, brother of the Duke of Newcastle, who in the early part of the eighteenth century owned Esher Place, supposed to have been one of the many possessions of Wolsey. Presumably, therefore, Mr. Pelham erected this provision for wayfarers. Modern rests, however, are not rare in some parts of the country. A district exceptionally well supplied with them is that round Warrington, though those in this locality are merely like mounting blocks. They were all set up about the middle of the nineteenth century by a certain benevolent lady. Near Hoghton Tower, on the Blackburn-Preston road, there is a good specimen of the more imposing type of modern travellers' rest. Erected by one

of the Hoghton family, whose initials are cut on the front, it contains a well that is held in high esteem by wayfarers.

We have still, therefore, many wayside objects of more or less interest. They merit careful preservation; for they not only help us to realise the importance of the road when it was the only channel of communication, but illustrate customs which have long been extinct.

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CHAPTER XIII.

Guideposts and Milestones.

To those who journeyed along English roads even at so late a period as the reign of George I. guideposts and milestones, for all their utility were far less familiar objects than crosses and memorials. They rank as road furniture, and the King's highway was furnished with a tardiness that, while it enriched the proprietors of posting houses, wrung maledictions from generations of travellers.

Guideposts were scattered over the countryside long before the first milestone proper made its appearance. The earliest type was a wayside cross bearing a directing arm, similar, perhaps, to "Cross-a-Hand, a Direction Post so called," which Ogilby tells us was near Coggeshall, on the Harwich Road, about 1699; and probably one of these combination provisions for travellers stood at, and gave its name to, Hand Cross, on the Brighton Road. What its successor was like is uncertain; but it seems to have been far from perfect. "It is a usuall manner," says the compiler of a road book published in early Stuart times,[1] "in many parts where wayes be doubtfull for a traveller to find a standing post with a hand to direct men the ready way; but those

[1] "A Direction for the English Traviller."

hands tell thee not how many miles, nor the distance from place to place." There were, however, comparatively few guideposts fifty or sixty years later. In a road book published in 1682, and professing to give an "exact account of the four principal roads of England" (the Aberystwyth, Arundel, Berwick, and Bristol roads), only one is mentioned, and that is said to be just beyond Bourton-on-the-Hill, "at the cross ways to Winchcomb on the left and Campden and Blockley on the right";[1] and a lady who, in the last decade of the seventeenth century, rode through England on horseback found the parts of the country she traversed no better marked for the guidance of travellers, or she would not have recorded that at the cross-roads between Wigan and Preston were "hands pointing to each road, with ye names of ye great towns on."[2]

"The Pillar," near Hope.

There was little improvement in the early part of the eighteenth century, notwithstanding that the Legislature had, by an Act passed in 1698, ordered the justices to erect guideposts at cross-roads, and prescribed a penalty of 10s. on road surveyors in case of default. At quarter sessions the administration of the statute was frequently

[1] W. H. Gent, "The Infallible Guide to Travellers."
[2] Celia Fiennes, "Through England on Horseback."

impugned. Thus, the Devonshire "Grand Inquest," in 1713, presented that the "Act was of great use and benefit to her Majesty's subjects . . . but the execution thereof hath in many places of this country been neglected and wholly omitted, to the great inconvenience and damage

A Seventeenth Century "Handing Post."

of her Majesty's liege people." The justices in their several divisions were thereupon ordered to put the Act into execution.[1] Travellers also drew attention to the lack of guidance even at the most perplexing places, Arthur Young stating that he arrived at a certain cross-road which "fronted nine ways at once without a single directing post."[2] We find, too, an anonymous writer[3] proposing, in 1753, that "way posts shall be set up at all cross-roads for the

[1] S. and B. Webb, "English Local Government," i. 454.

[2] "Six Months' Tour Through the North of England," iv. 423.

[3] "Proposals at Large for the Easy and Effective Amendment of the Roads."

direction of travellers," and complaining of the annoyance and delay arising from the lack of them. "Coaches, with their companies," he says, "have been often forced to wait at the Appearance of Two or Three such Turnings, whilst they have sent their servants little journeys up the respective uncertain ways, only to inquire which of them ought to be pursued." It was not, indeed, until after Parliamenthad, by the first General Turnpike Act (7 George III., c. 40), imposed on turnpike trusts the duty of setting up and maintaining guideposts that the roads of England were anything like adequately furnished with such useful aids to the traveller.

A Queen Anne Guidepost, Hopton.

Of the early guideposts we have still many examples, most of which are non-official, having been erected by private persons as an act of philanthropy. One of the most remarkable of these relics is a "handing post" on the summit of Broadway Hill. Set up in 1669 by Nathan Izod, a member of a family which owns and farms land in the district to this day, it has for nearly two and a half centuries pointed, by means of its stencilled arms, "the way to Gloster,"

"the way to Woster," "the way to Warwick," and "the way to Oxford."

Not far from this old public servant is Teddington Hands, a five-armed post with only a little, if any, less praiseworthy a record. It bears a brass plate, inscribed:

> Edmund Attwood, of the Vine Tree,
> At the First Time erected me,
> And freely he did this bestow
> Strange Travellers the way to shew:
> Six generations past & gone,
> Repaired by Charles Attwood, of Teddington.

The first four lines are repeated on the post itself, with the addition:

> Ten generations past & gone:
> Repaired by Alice Attwood,
> Of Teddington, August 10th, 1876.

The Vine Tree is the name of a neighbouring farm, which was in the possession of Edmund Attwood and his descendants for a very long period. When Alice Attwood, the last of her race, repaired the post, she was more than eighty years old. She then held the farm, and she continued to hold it up to the time of her death.

A fine private guidepost of a different type remains at the entrance to West Wycombe. It is a substantial stone pillar, surmounted by a ball, and bearing an inscription on each side of the capital. The distances set forth on it differ, as usual, from those on the modern guideposts and milestones. For it travellers in pre-railway days owed thanks to Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord Despencer, who in 1753 erected it to com-

A Private Milestone near Leeds.
A Monumental Milestone.

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memorate the making of the two miles of the Oxford Road between High Wycombe and West Wycombe.

In the middle of a grassy plot at fourcross-roads near Bicton, Devonshire, stands another remarkable private guidepost. On its sides are directions, followed by scriptural texts:

To Woodbury, Topsham, Exeter.—Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

To Brixton, Ottery, Honiton.—O, hold up our goings in Thy paths, that our footsteps slip not.

To Otterton, Sidmouth, Culliton: A.D. 1743.—O, that our ways were made so direct that we might keep Thy statutes.

To Budleigh.—Make us go in the paths of Thy commandments, for therein is our desire.

No county has more early guideposts than Derbyshire, where, for reasons by no means obscure, many yet do service. At Hopton, near Ashborne, is a weather-worn guidepost, about 7ft. in height, of Queen Anne's reign, dating as it does from 1705. Nearly as old is "The Pillar," a stone guidepost on a Roman road high above the village of Hope, and peculiar in that the capital is secured by a bolt and nut, though the same arrangement is to be seen on a similar, but much smaller, survival at Edale. In all probability "The Pillar" and other contemporary guideposts in Derbyshire were set up in accordance with the provisions of the Act of William III.'s reign.

In parts of the West Riding, however, many old road marks stand to this day. They date

from 1700 to about 1750, and were provided by constables and surveyors consequent on orders made by the justices at Rotherham, Sheffield, Doncaster, and other places in pursuance of the Act of 1698. At Rotherham, on August 7th, 1700, directions were given for "stoops to be sett up in crosse highways," and a similar order was made in 1733 and again in 1738. Nothing was said thus far about indicating distance, but at Sheffield, on October 11th, 1738, the order relating to guideposts was supplemented by one that, "besides the name of the next Market Town or other notorious place, every such guidepost shall express how far such town or place is distant therefrom."[1]

The stones which still remain vary considerably alike in size, lettering, and accuracy. One of the most curious is at Clifford's Bent. The top line, "To Rippon," is reversed, running as it does from right to left, no doubt because the designer thought that the letters should read in the direction to which they referred. Of the well-executed stones there is a good specimen on the old trade route between Halifax and Settle. Dated 1730, and known as the "Porridge Stoop," it stands at cross-roads near Pinhow, and, in addition to indicating by "fists" the way to Colne, Settle, Skipton, and Keighley, gives the distances in statute miles.

[1] *Yorkshire Archæological Journal*, xxii. 31.

Besides such relics as these, there are numerous stones which, though they guided travellers at a time when England was, for the most part, an unmarked wilderness, have been converted to uses of a much less noble character. Several remain at West Cleveland, one, dated 1612, forming part of a wall at Battersby. Most of the guideposts set up in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, were broken up by ignorant surveyors for road metal. They merited a better fate, if only because they might possibly have furnished valuable evidence respecting public rights of way.

Comparatively modern an institution as the guidepost is, the milestone, as we know it, is still more so. The Romans, during their occupation of Britain, set up many *milliaria*, some of which have been discovered, and, after many vicissitudes, are now in safe keeping. A Roman milestone in Leicester Museum had a particularly chequered career before it reached that haven. It was found in 1771 by some men who were digging for gravel near the Malton Road (the Fosse) and one mile from Thurmaston, and was, when unearthed, close to a square mounting block.[1] After

[1] Both mounting blocks and milestones were set up by the Romans. "The work that he [Caius Gracchus] took most pains with was that of the public roads, in which he paid a regard to beauty as well as use. They were drawn in a straight line through the country, and either paved with hewn stone or made of a binding sand, brought thither for that purpose. . . . Besides, he divided all the roads into miles, of near eight furlongs each, and set up pillars of stone to mark the divisions. He likewise erected other stones at proper distances on each side of the way, to assist travellers who rode without servants to mount their horses."—Plutarch's "Lives" (Langhornes' trans.).

narrowly escaping conversion into road metal, it lay neglected for twelve years and then the Leicester Corporation had it removed to a spot near Belgrave Gate. For twelve years subsequently its office was that of pillar to a street lamp. In 1824 the lamp was removed and a cross substituted, and it was "beautified" with a coat of paint. Twenty years later, through the efforts of the Literary and Philosophical Society, it was taken down and lodged in the museum of the Mechanics' Institute, whence it was transferred to its present resting place in the annexe of the museum in the New Walk.

Milliaria, indeed, stood on some of our roads till as late as the second or third decade of the nineteenth century. But such evidences of Roman thoroughness were of necessity practically useless to English wayfarers. For these there were few distance marks, primitive or other, before the eighteenth century, and of those set up previously none appears to have been official. They were generally, at all events, supplied by private persons for either business or philanthropic reasons.

Mile-marks such as could be understanded of the people appeared on the Dover Road in 1633. Writing in that year to Sir Edward Dering, Lieutenant of Dover Castle and of the Cinque Ports, the Mayor and Jurats of Dover complained of an additional charge exacted by the postmen, stating that the hackneymen of Dover and

Canterbury had measured the highway between these two places, set up posts at every mile end, and expressed the distance to be $15\frac{1}{4}$ miles, for which they demanded 3s. 9d. for every horse, or 9d. more than the ordinary rate.[1] Sir Edward Dering, in forwarding the complaint to the Clerk of the Council, explained that, Kentish miles being longer than those in some places, the allowance had been 3d. per mile, instead of the $2\frac{1}{2}$d. paid in some parts of the country.[2] The Kentish mile was, therefore, in 1633 officially recognised as longer than the statute mile. It would seem, also, that the hackneymen's miles were those of the county, because by modern measurement the distance between Dover and Canterbury is fifteen miles six furlongs.

The fact that Kentish miles were recognised in connection with the post is in itself fatal to the oft-repeated theory that those of the distich—

> Essex stiles, Kentish miles, and Norfolk wiles
> Many a man beguiles—

were not actually longer than statute miles, but only seemed to be so by reason of the badness of the roads. There is, however, additional evidence on this point in early maps, the distances in which are given in statute miles and Kentish miles.

[1] State Papers (Dom.), 1633-4, p. 56. [2] Ibid., p. 68.

At least one other mile-mark, and that an actual stone, appears to have been in existence at a little later date; for Ogilby, in guiding the traveller from Faringdon to Lechlade, mentions "the 2 Mile Stone." We reach firmer ground, however, in the first decade of the seventeenth century. Then there was certainly set up on the Great North Road a series of stones which, though not primarily mile-marks, yet served as such. Thoresby, the historian of Leeds, mentions these wayside objects. "This day," he says, "we met with a great number of horsing stones, each of three steps, but cut out of one entire stone, inscribed 'G. B., 1708,' being erected by Edmund Bolter, uncle to my kind friend, the present Earl of Harewood."[1] The stones, one of which has escaped destruction, extended from Stilton to Grantham, and were provided by Boulter, himself a corpulent man and a regular traveller between the two places, mainly for the convenience of horse riders. He "designed," Defoe states, to carry them on to London "for the public benefit." Since, however, they were a mile apart, they served a double purpose, and were distance indicators as well as mounting blocks.

Early in the next century a whole series of indubitable milestones was placed on the King's highway. The scene of this innovation was the Cambridge Road. Trinity Hall, one of the

[1] Thoresby "Diary," ii. 36.

oldest of the colleges comprising the University on the Cam, held in trust the sum of £1,600, which had been left to it in 1586 and 1599 by Dr. William Mouse and Mr. Robert Hare, the interest to be applied to repairing the sixteen miles of road between Cambridge and Barkway. In 1725 Dr. William Warren, the then Master of Trinity, taking a broader view than had previously been taken of the testators' intentions, began to set up milestones along the stretch of road which his college had maintained for so many years, and by 1732 the work was completed, though subsequently some of the stones were taken up and replaced by larger ones. The first stone from Cambridge, a fine monolith about 12ft. or 14ft. in length, is said to have been a Roman *milliarium*. On it formerly appeared :

1727.
Le St. Maries.

This has been obliterated ; but it and the other stones, which all bear the black crescent of Trinity College shield, are in a good state of preservation, and have suffered very little indeed from the ravages of time.

Another set of milestones was erected ten or twelve years after that on the Cambridge Road. The inhabitants of Croydon in 1743 had the highway from the Standard, in Cornhill, to that town measured, and thirteen milestones set up along its course ; and the utility of these marks

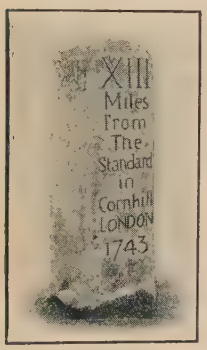
was such that the gentlemen of Sussex continued the series along the then Brighton Road, that through East Grinstead. Still whole and on its original site is the thirteenth, and last, of the stones subscribed for by the people of Croydon. For some years the oldest mile-mark on the present way to Brighton, it is now enclosed in the grounds of Purley Cottage Hospital. Of the other stones more have descended to our times, several remaining in the Caterham Valley.

The "Porridge Stoop," near Pinhow.

The movement now spread rapidly. Isolated milestones were set up in many parts of the country, generally, if local legends may be trusted, with a view to settling disputes with postboys. This is the story told of a tall milestone at Sheffield Green and near the entrance to Sheffield Park. It is said to have been erected by one of the Earls of Sheffield, who, sharing the failing of many of his contemporaries, was unable to estimate mileage with the optimism of the postboys. After it was set up he had recorded on it the actual distance (found by measurement, at his cost) to East Grinstead, Lewes, and other towns; and when he was driven home subsequently he always referred to it on occasion

those whom he employed. In some cases, however, private milestones were doubtless erected for other reasons. A late example is at Adel, near Leeds. Dated 1764, it was paid for, if not actually put on its present site, by a Mr. John Broadbent, who held the farm hard by, and whose initials it bears.

When the eighteenth century was well advanced official milestones were for the first time placed on the King's highway. By the Act which directed trusts to furnish their roads with guideposts, their surveyors were further ordered to erect milestones, "with proper inscriptions and figures thereon denoting the names and distances from the principal towns or places on each respective road." A penalty was, moreover, imposed for defacing milestones or direction posts. For some reason, probably through oversight, a similar provision was not inserted in the General Highways Act (1835). Surveyors were authorised to set up and maintain direction posts, etc., but not expressly ordered to do so. The omission, however, was rectified in part by a later statute (the Highways Act, 1882), and ever since the provision of guideposts and milestones has been obligatory on highway authorities.

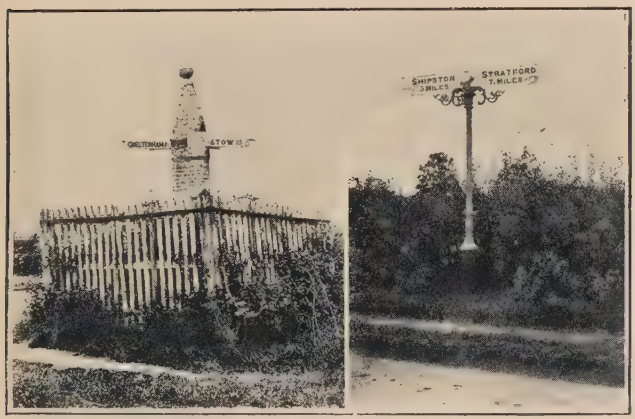


Oldest Milestone on the Brighton Road.

The duty laid on the trusts by statutory enactment necessarily created a demand for a large number of milestones, a standard pattern of which was, in consequence, soon introduced. Before, there had been no particular design, stones even of the same series differing in some particulars; now, the principle of least action came into operation, and mile-marks were standardised. At first they were square, but by about 1780 the now familiar double-faced variety had been introduced in the eastern counties. They were then on the Thetford-Norwich, the Yarmouth, and other roads. Paterson describes them as "well adapted for travellers in carriages, having two sides towards the road . . . slanted so that the number may be seen at a great distance." He notes, also, that some of the milestones in this district bore the name of the parish, and it may be inferred therefrom that the practice of giving such useful information to wayfarers originated in the eastern counties at the time when the double-faced milestone was first put on the roads.

From that type of distance indicator the only important variation which has been set up in this country is a feature of the Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick Road. It is a tall post, bearing two large arms, on each of which are painted the name and distance of the place in the direction indicated. The first of these posts, or.

as they are called locally, "mile-irons," is at Long Compton, and from there to Warwick there is one at every mile. These admirable marks were set up nearly at the end of the coaching era, that travellers might with greater ease glean from them such information as milestones usually yield.



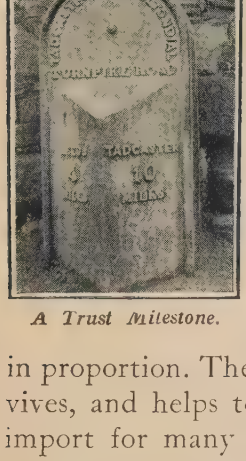
Teddington Hands *A Warwickshire "Mile-Iron."*

Many of the conventional mile-marks set up by the trusts are also still in existence. Some are dated, on others the distances are in computed or "customary" miles, and on the "great" roads and their tributaries are a few bearing the names of landmarks which were swept into oblivion before the first known milestone, private or official, was set up on an English road

The rural labourer, as he plods homeward along the way to Scotland, may still see that he is so many miles from where "Hicks's Hall formerly stood," and at the same time, in a different part of the country, another son of the soil may pass a milestone which tells him its distance from Tyburn Turnpike, St. Giles's Pound, or the Standard, in Cornhill. Yet all these zero points are gone, and it would be as vain to seek "where Hicks's Hall formerly stood" (though for many years the spot was indicated by a tablet) as for the building itself. The Standard which many people still associate with Cornhill was removed as far back as 1671.

Besides helping to preserve the memory of many historic features of bygone London, these milestones also illustrate how numerous were the places at which the trunk roads and their connections were assumed to begin. In the first edition of Cary's "New Itinerary," published in 1798, the distances on such lines of communication are from the General Post Office; but neither then nor subsequently were all the roads radiating from the metropolis measured, for general purposes, from any one central point. The standards were: For the south-western roads, Hyde Park Corner; for the western, generally Tyburn; for the northern and north-western, Holborn Bars, the site of St. Giles's Pound (near the church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields), and Hicks's Hall, which

was the sessions house of the county of Middlesex and stood in St. John Street, Clerkenwell; for the Kent roads, the southern side of London Bridge; for the Portsmouth Road and its tributaries, Stones' End, in the Borough; for the southern roads in general, the Surrey side of Westminster Bridge, the Standard, in Cornhill, and the Obelisk, in Westminster Bridge Road; and for the eastern roads, Shoreditch Church, though some were measured from the Standard, in Cornhill.



A Trust Milestone.

The most peculiar of these zero marks was Stones' End, in Southwark,[1] because it was movable. It was the spot where the "stones of London" ended and the gravel road began, or where town and country met; and as those stones were pushed out further the Portsmouth Road and its offshoots became shorter in proportion. The name "Stones' End" still survives, and helps to perpetuate a term of sinister import for many years to country-folk journeying to town.[2] Used to soft roads, they spoke with horror of the "stones of London," the

[1] Though this was the Stones' End of the guide books and milestones, there were other places of the same name. In an Act of 1712 (12 Anne, c. 19) is mentioned "Stone's End, in the parish of St. Leonard, Shoreditch."

[2] Since this was written London has shows a tendency to return to the Stone Age, a portion of Holborn having been re-laid with granite setts.

rough pavement which appears in so many of Hogarth's pictures, and which, besides being atrociously uneven, rattled as loudly as in "John Gilpin":

> Smack went the whip, round went the wheels.
> Were never folk so glad:
> The stones did rattle underneath
> As if Cheapside were mad.

It is to be hoped that the old milestones still standing will be treated with more respect than has been shown to many others of historic interest. As the Legislature omitted to order highway authorities to preserve the old landmarks, but left them to use their discretion in the matter, numerous examples, some of them unique, have, like scores of guideposts worthy of a better fate, been reduced to road metal. Such vandalism is deplorable. Milestones which have outlasted their utility to road users, as such, should be superannuated, not destroyed.

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CHAPTER XIV.

The Decline and Renaissance of the Road.

The proximate cause of the passing of turnpikes as an institution had a still more momentous effect on the King's highway in general. It diverted traffic into new channels, and beggared thousands whose livelihood was derived from the open road. Beginning at centres of population, decay spread along all the main lines as railways crept outward and robbed them of vitality. Mile by mile, stage by stage, the old roads were drained of their life-blood, till at last none was left, and they were dry as a caravan track in an Eastern desert.

By 1840 the traffic which had ebbed and flowed for centuries ceased, apparently for ever, on some main roads, and soon afterwards there were many miles of highway deserted save for idle toll-collectors, whose time was profitlessly spent in mourning the life which had surged past them and in cursing railways. The Brighton Road did not retain its old-time glories much later than September, 1840, when the railway was opened. In 1846 coaches stopped running on the Norwich Road, the last mail through Bury St. Edmunds covering the familiar ground on January 6th of that year. Four months later ended the Southampton and Oxford service. In the same year,

too, railways extended along the whole course of the Great North Road. With the opening of the Edinburgh and Berwick Railway the last stretch of the ancient way to the north was superseded, and coaches disappeared from every part of it. Before 1845, in fact, coaching was patently moribund all over the country, though it survived here and there for years afterwards, nowhere, perhaps, more strangely than at Manchester, the last four-horse coach out of that city, the "Derby Dilly," not finishing its course before October, 1858.

One of the earliest results of the growth of the new system of communication was the abandonment of highway improvements. A few years before railways were initiated there had been contemplated some road works which, had they been completed, would have been the most important carried out in this country since the Roman era, including as they did nothing less than a road to replace, or, at least, supplement, the ancient way to Scotland. The course of this undertaking, of which Telford was appointed engineer, was to be as straight as possible. About 1824 the section from Edinburgh to Morpeth was actually completed, and some years later the other and larger portion was begun; but the coming of railways stopped the work, which still remains unfinished. All that we have of the proposed new Great North Road is the highway

from Morpeth to Wooler, Coldstream, and Edinburgh. This road, though hilly, is much shorter and better than that by the coast, and indicates that the planned road would have been a great improvement.

Subsidiary, albeit large, schemes of a similar nature were also abandoned. Relics of one of these ill-starred enterprises remain at Ferrybridge, near Doncaster. When the coaching age was rapidly nearing its end, some speculators proposed to cut off a part of the Great North Road, and substitute for it a straight and level road across the valley. The work was started, and pushed forward rapidly, the promoters calculating on a satisfactory return from the tolls for which Parliamentary powers had been obtained. When, however, the enterprise was nearing completion, traffic deserted the North Road, and consequently it was left unfinished. A lofty embankment is the most prominent feature of the derelict work, in connection with which a large sum was lost.

On wayside inns also the diversion of traffic was disastrous, practically all their trade going away at once. Even large houses gladly welcomed customers whom they had aforetime openly despised. These were foot travellers, the scorned of all the coaching inns in pre-railway days. Samuel Bamford, who tramped twice over the road between Manchester and London, called at

the Bedford Arms, Woburn, and asked for a glass of beer, only to be told by a "female of superior appearance" that they did not entertain foot passengers. "I expressed my surprise at that," says the Manchester Radical, "and assured her I was both able and willing to pay for what I called for. She said she did not

The "Swan," Tetsworth.

doubt it, but it was an invariable rule not to serve persons travelling on foot, and the rule could not be departed from." But not long afterwards haughty pride had a fall.

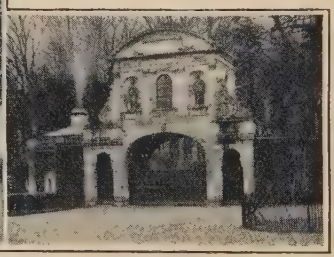
The ruin that befell many of the coaching inns is epitomised in the history of the "Swan," at Tetsworth. Built in the reign of William and Mary, this fine house welcomed travellers along

the Oxford Road, of which it was long one of the principal institutions. In the third decade of the nineteenth century it was taken by a Mr. Slatter, who, besides refitting it at much expense, laid in a large stock of wines and spirits. Shortly afterwards the Great Western Railway knocked the coaches off the Oxford Road, with the result that in 1840 the old house, unable any longer to retain its position, was "sold up." Chaises, post-horses, furniture, wines and spirits, and the rest of the stock-in-trade, as well as much beautiful woodwork, were brought under the hammer; and then its former owner, having watched the last load taken away, left Tetsworth a ruined man. Half of the great building is now let off; but even the part remaining is too large for present-day requirements.

Some of the old inns, however, fared worse still. They shared the fate of the substantial, cosy-looking hostelry at Sunrising, Edge Hill. This house was one of the best known on the Stratford Road, and, in addition to doing a large coaching trade, was a favourite resort of the newly married, many of whom spent their honeymoon under its hospitable roof. But when traffic departed from the Stratford Road the doors of the old inn were closed to the general public, and it was converted into a dwelling-house.

The famous inns of Speenhamland, including the "Pelican," memorable now to most people

because of Quin's declaration that it might "well be called the 'Pelican,' from its enormous bill," were among the numerous other hostelries which were compelled to retire from business. Through this part of Newbury had poured a vast amount of traffic. It had caught the full flood between Southampton and Oxford, as well as the volume which had surged to and from "the Bath," and to accommodate which many remarkable highway improvements had



Sunrising Inn, Edge Hill.
Temple Bar in Retirement.

been carried out. It was primarily for the benefit of two gouty noblemen who took the waters regularly that a cross road from Reading to Marlow was made. About the middle of the eighteenth century the Marquis of Salisbury and his neighbour, the Earl of Essex, paid yearly visits to Bath. Cross roads being at this period very bad, they were in general obliged to travel

via London, and consequently were not only a very long time in getting to their destination, but subjected to a good deal of jolting over the stones of London, which aggravated their gout, and through it their temper. The noble lords promoted, therefore, a turnpike road in a nearly straight line from Hatfield to Chalk Pit Farm, Knowl Hill, and the outcome was the present road, which shortened their journey to Bath by at least twenty miles.

At a later period, when travelling was possible under fairly comfortable conditions, forty-two coaches passed through Speenhamland every day, and at it the Bath coach "slept." The "Pelican," the "Castle," the "Chequers," the "Cross Keys," and the "King's Arms" were full of guests, and the theatre, built in 1802 for the pleasure of the gentlefolk who broke their journey at the inns, was nightly packed with travellers. Then came the railways, and the flourishing trade was killed at a single blow. The pilgrim who looks for the "Pelican" now will find it under the guise of a veterinary establishment.

If the loss of passengers caused the most widespread misery, it was not the only factor in bringing about the decline of the road. The diversion of other kinds of traffic materially contributed to that result. Farm produce of all kinds had been remunerative to the trusts, as

well as, in some cases, to those who carried it, particularly when it had been transported in stage coaches. Earlier in the century all the places on the coach from Glasgow to Edinburgh were sometimes occupied by early lambs going to market, at a cost of 16s. for an inside and 10s. for an outside seat; and such animals were commonly conveyed to London in the same way, while shortly before Christmas the Norwich coach was stuffed with turkeys and the Lincoln coach with geese.

Droves of cattle had also wended their way to market, and, though little had been paid to the trusts for their passage, because they had trudged along the byways to avoid payment of toll, they and their drovers had been the mainstay of many wayside alehouses. The volume of such traffic and the rapidity with which it disappeared are illustrated by the records of the "Bird-in-Hand," a public-house at Tasburgh, near Norwich. During the droving season of 1845 the landlord provided shelter for no fewer than 9,300 beasts, and purchased for consumption by them and by horses fifty tons of hay, whereas in the following year, when the Norfolk Railway was opened, his animal guests numbered twelve all told.[1]

Enormous quantities of minerals and merchandise had also necessarily been transported by road,

[1] *Norfolk Chronicle*, April 25th, 1846.

to the profit of highway industries and undertakings in general, and, during the half-century

Partridge and Iliff's
WAGGONS

SET out from the BELL Inn in *Friday-Street*, LONDON. almoſt every Day, and Carry Goods and Paſſengers to the Places under mentioned:

FALMOUTH, and all Parts of CORNWALL;

PLYMOUTH,
EXON,
HONITON,
AXMINSTER,
} and all Parts of DEVON;

CHARMOUTH,
BRIDPORT
BROADWINSOR,
BEAMINSTER,
DORCHESTER,
POOL,
WINBURN,
WAREHAM, and
BLANDFORD,
} and to all Places adjacent.

They call at the *White Bear* and *New White Horſe Cellar* in *Piccadilly*, going out and coming in.

An Eighteenth Century Carriers' Advertisement.

preceding the introduction of steam traction, of the owners of road railways in particular. These enterprises originated owing to the need for

cheap transit, the lack of which was most keenly felt in connection with coal. In colliery districts many wagon ways were made in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and about fifty years afterwards schemes innumerable were formulated for similar lines. A proposal for a stone railway for turnpike roads, formed of two parallel lines of paving, and estimated to cost £4,000 per mile, was in 1808 brought before a Parliamentary committee, which, in drawing attention to it, expressed the opinion that the "idea of conveying goods and carriages on railways is likely to prevail the more the subject is considered." Several road railways were, in fact, made about the beginning of the century. The first laid in England under Parliamentary sanction was planned to run from London through Croydon, Reigate, and Arundel to Portsmouth; but the only part actually constructed was that from Croydon to Wandsworth. It consisted of grooved iron rails, on which carriages or trucks were drawn by horses, and was available for use, on payment of tolls, by anybody who had a vehicle with wheels which would fit the rails. Promising as the undertaking had seemed, it was, in fact, only short lived, the Croydon Canal (opened in 1809) depriving it of much traffic, and the London and Brighton Railway finishing it off altogether. The unfortunate shareholders lost every penny

they had subscribed, or £30,000 in all; and consolation they had none save that they were not the only sufferers through the failure of such undertakings as theirs.

Altogether, indeed, millions were lost in a few years consequent on the opening of the era of steam communication. After about 1850 there was scarcely any enterprise connected with the road that continued to be remunerative, and investors in such undertakings, except those who had sunk money in certain bridges, received a heavy blow. Some bridges were profitable for years after the general abolition of turnpikes, while those which were built by tontines that had not expired necessarily went on benefiting survivors. The tontine on Boston Town Bridge, one of the many works constructed by money raised on the principle devised by Lorenzo Tonti, lasted for a remarkably long period. Executed in 1816 for £10,000, made by 100 nominees of £100 each, it did not expire till December, 1904. At last it was closed by the death of a lady aged ninety-two, who was nominated by her father when she was an infant. For many years she drew from the tontine an annuity, which increased as the other nominees died, and ultimately sold her interest to a certain gentleman, who, having regard to her age, gave comparatively little for it. But it outlasted him, and, indeed, returned his executors £700 per

annum for ten years after his death! In general, however, those who had invested money on the natural assumption that traffic would continue along the old channels sustained a shock without a parallel in the history of inland communication.

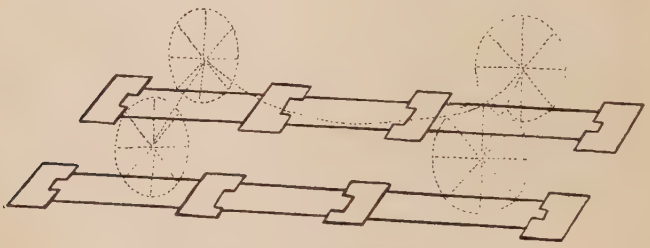


Diagram of a Stone Railway.

Little imagination is needed to visualise the King's highway itself undergoing, in these circumstances, rapid decay and becoming again cut up into longitudinal strips by infantile ruts; but the actual degeneration was far greater than the conditions warrant us in picturing. As early as 1846, the year when the Norfolk Railway was opened, roads in that county were stated to be "half-a-yard deep in mud" and almost impassable. "Heavy goods in large quantities," it is said, were "sent from Norwich to London and from thence to Ipswich by rail, 196 miles, instead of [by] the direct route of 40 miles by road, the rail conveyance being cheaper and quicker."[1] If

[1] "Norfolk Annals," i. 460.

the deterioration was not so rapid in other parts of the country, it was, at all events, marked and continuous. In many places the old coaching highways became like sheep tracks, and before 1870 parts of even the Great North Road were covered with grass. The public apathy was such, too, that once more greedy landowners were allowed to practise that filching which Harrison had denounced in the reign of Elizabeth, and to add to their estates by annexing the grassy strips which the trusts had used as summer roads, and which they had had to purchase from those same landowners at grossly extortionate rates. There was, moreover, a recrudescence of road diverting, the effect of which was to make our highway system still more tortuous.

A great change for the worse, in fact, took place in the condition of the King's highway. As turnpike trusts expired the roads again became wholly under the jurisdiction of parishes, which had always been responsible for them, and also partly liable, except for a short period, for their maintenance. "The obligation to maintain all public roads, with the exception of those which are to be repaired *ratione tenuræ* or *clausuræ*, is," a royal commission reported in 1840, "a public obligation and in the nature of a public tax." It then proceeded to point out that "when a highway has been converted into a turnpike road and placed under the manage-

ment of trustees, with power to collect tolls to be applied to the repairs, if the way be out of repair, the parish (or township, as the case may be) are the only parties who are liable to be indicted, and must seek their remedies against the trustees, which they have, after conviction, by motion for relief against the trustees under the Turnpike Act 3 George IV., c. 126, sec. 10."[1] During most of the time that the turnpike system was in operation, moreover, trustees were empowered to, and frequently did, call upon parishes to assist in the maintenance of their roads either by statute labour or by a payment in lieu. The only alteration brought about by the abolition of the turnpike system, therefore, was that parishes had to repair all their roads without any help from tolls. For this reason the position of those bodies after the discontinuance of trusts was not very different from what it had been before. Since, however, parishes had for so many years been relieved of part, at least, of the cost of their highways, they sustained by the abolition of turnpikes a shock which paralysed them, and, there being nobody sufficiently interested in road communication to galvanize them into activity the old lines of traffic suffered greatly.

While roads in rural districts were rapidly deteriorating, those in towns and their environs steadily improved. A reform which gave rise

[1] Report of Royal Commission on Roads (1840).

Relics at Nether Stowey : (1) Transplanted Clock Tower and Lock-up. (2) The Gazebo.

to much bitterness was the sweeping away of obstructions. London rid itself of many relics, including Temple Bar, for centuries its western gate. Pulled down in 1879, the fabric lay dismembered for some time, and then the stones were given to Sir H. B. Meux, who re-erected them at the principal entrance to Theobald's Park, near Cheshunt, Herts. The removal of so famous a landmark had some influence in sealing the fate of impediments to traffic in other parts of the country, though it was not a precedent recognised when the Bar, at Southampton, was threatened with demolition or when iconoclasts wished to remove Hotspur's Gate, Alnwick. In some towns, most of them in manufacturing districts where the growth of industries and the consequent increase of traffic had brought on numbers of old structures the scorn of the utilitarian, a middle course was taken, and relics which obstructed the way were transplanted on fresh sites belonging to the public. A sweeping removal of this kind took place at Bingley, in the West Riding, where a market, a cross, and a set of stocks were transferred to the public park, and the main street, which had been nearly blocked, was cleared from side to side. This kind of improvement, however, was not confined to the industrial parts of England, several villages clearing the way in the comparatively simple method adopted by Nether Stowey, near Bridgwater.

Here a clock tower and a lock-up which stood in the middle of the road were moved to the side, and are now as much out of the way as is the local gazebo, a summerhouse from which many a party witnessed the passing of the Minehead coach.

About 1870 the King's highway reached its low-water mark. For twenty years scarcely a new road had then been made except in urban districts, and the repairs to the old highways,

Transplanted Relics at Bingley.

even those which formed arteries of communication, had been of the most contemptible character. Roads in general were in consequence in a worse condition than they had been for a generation. In summer multitudinous weeds luxuriated in their depths, and in winter they bore a thick coat of rutty mud, through which the pedestrian struggled with difficulty and the horseman at no little risk. Our whole highway system, outside of towns, was well-nigh derelict, and a traveller might have journeyed over it for many leagues without encountering any traffic other than local.

Then began that remarkable revival which still continues and gathers force yearly. It was with the advent of the cycle that the renaissance set in. The "ordinary" had a vogue, and before its novelty had time to pall the tricycle was introduced and taken up with enthusiasm by the middle-aged. Next came the "safety," with the aid of which the open road may be said to have been "discovered" by the present generation. Just as cycling began to wane the automobile was brought forward, or, rather, brought forward again, and, though for a time its progress was checked by reactionary legislation similar to that which had killed self-propelled traffic in the early part of the century, its course was ultimately cleared by the "Emancipation" Act of 1896, which relieved the driver of such a vehicle from the necessity of being preceded by a man bearing a red flag, such as it had been obligatory to carry in front of a traction engine. Finally, from the automobile for personal conveyance sprang motor vans for the delivery of goods, merchandise, etc.

As a result of this unparalleled series of improvements in transport, there has been a remarkable drift back to the open road. If the adventurous youths who bestrode the high wheel did not make much impression on the countryside, the tricyclists, and still more the riders of the "safety," roused the King's highway from

its somnolence and brought a measure of prosperity to wayside inns. Greater far are the results which the automobile has since achieved; for it has not only resuscitated the whole of our highway system, but strangled the railway monopoly, which can never again dominate the country as it did less than twenty years ago.

In the service of the Royal Mail alone the automobile is now doing work of great interest and value. The Post Office, with which the history of road communication is very closely connected, never wholly deserted the King's highway, but clung to it, and retained much of the nomenclature of stage-coach days. When the parcels post was introduced, and the railway companies claimed about one-half of the postage paid on the parcels, it strengthened its old ties by introducing a service of road vans, which are now being displaced by big and fast motor vans, with "guards," as of old, only the present race carry a truncheon and whistle, instead of loaded firearms. The Post Office, by thus acting in accordance with its traditions, has materially helped in the return to the road.

It cannot be said that the improvements in highways have kept pace with those in transport; but our roads are certainly better now than they ever were. Twenty years' steady effort has not been wasted; it has borne some fruit, though not so much as was expected. The general im-

provement was started by cyclists, who, while everywhere preventing the King's highway from deteriorating further, actually stimulated some local authorities to bring their share of it into passable condition. Besides taking individual action to this end, they moved through their organisation, the Cyclists' Touring Club, which was formed in 1878, when touring awheel became

Westwick Arch. (*See page 182.*)

popular. The club became known to the general public by the danger-boards which it placed on hills. It had been preceded in this useful work by the Bicycle Union (now the National Cyclists' Union), which set up a number of similar warnings, the first on the top of Muswell Hill, in the north of London. The "C.T.C." boards, indeed, probably attracted attention more by their number than by their novelty, though they were the first seen in many parts of the country. However

this may be, the club missed no opportunity of stirring up highway authorities, and doubtless paved the way for many reforms. It was most successful in its efforts after the establishment of county councils. Before those bodies were formed the number of highway authorities was so great, and the views they took of their responsibilities were so divergent, that it was impossible to rouse them to effective action. When, however, main roads came under the control of county councils, some of the absurdities of highway administration were abolished, and real progress was made. That progress, thanks to the persistent agitation carried on by automobilists, has continued, and the institution of the Road Board marks an important stage in it. Already the dreams of old cyclists have thereby been realised, and that still greater improvements will be carried out in the near future, some of them of incalculable value to the country, cannot for a moment be doubted.

A pleasing vista thus opens out—a vista of a transformed countryside, of the decline of railways, of their relegation to very fast and very heavy traffic, of the road as the dominating feature in internal communication and as the greatest factor in the affairs of the nation.

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